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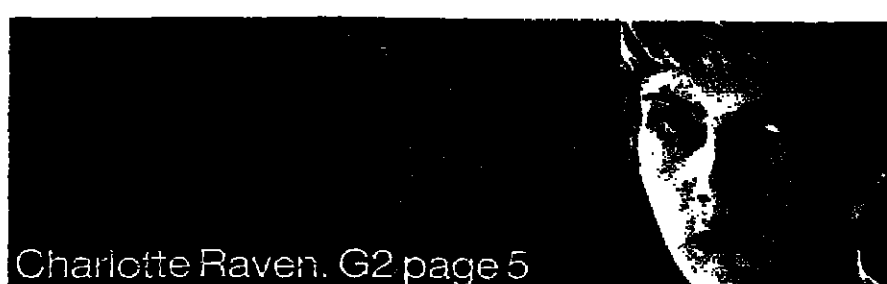


The Guardian

EUROPE



G2 with European weather



Charlotte Raven, G2 page 5



G2 pages 12-13

Lawson accused of being an MI6 agent

Richard Morton-Taylor and
Ewen MacAskill

THE editor of the Sunday Telegraph, Dominic Lawson, was named in the Commons yesterday as an MI6 "asset" who was paid for his services for British intelligence.

Later, the Labour MP, George Galloway, tabled an early day motion saying he was "greatly disturbed by the news that a national newspaper editor, Mr Dominic Lawson... has for a considerable period of time served as an intelligence asset of the British secret services who paid him large sums of money into foreign bank accounts for services he rendered under the guise of a journalist and editor."

A Foreign Office spokesman speaking for MI6 said the claim "comes from someone now widely familiar as a source of sensational inventions". He added: "It is policy that we do not comment on intelligence matters. We cannot, therefore, comment on this specific allegation but we can, however, point out very forcefully that SIS [the Secret Intelligence Service, commonly called MI6] would never have an agent who was editor of a British newspaper."

Earlier yesterday, the Guardian questioned Mr Lawson about articles on the Bosnian civil war, published in the Spectator magazine when he was the editor, written by an MI6 officer under a false name. The officer is believed to have left MI6.

Last night, Mr Lawson told the Guardian: "You claim articles written by Kenneth Roberts were in fact written by an SIS officer. I have no means of knowing if you are right and, if you are, it is news to me." The FO said it could not comment.

Mr Sedgmore named Mr Lawson during an adjournment debate in which he concentrated on the need for a Freedom of Information Act. He said the commitment of such an act was a fair, free and independent press.

Mr Galloway tabled a series of questions to the Prime Minister asking if public funds had been paid into "any foreign bank account for the benefit of Mr Dominic Lawson for any purpose" and whether Mr Lawson had "ever had any kind of employment relationship" with any government department.

John Wadham, director of Liberty, the civil rights group and lawyer for Mr Tomlinson and David Shayler, the former MI6 officer now in France, said it was time the Government reassured the public about malpractice in the security and intelligence services.

The spy and the Spectator, page 3

Gun fire over Iraq

Julian Borger in Washington,
Michael White and
Mark Tran in New York

UNITED STATES and British air strikes against Iraq looked imminent last night as officials in Washington said that Saddam Hussein's repeated non-compliance with United Nations weapons inspections left no room for negotiation.

ment hearings in the House of Representatives in the light of the Iraq crisis. After two telephone conversations with President Bill Clinton in 24 hours, Tony Blair used his last pre-Christmas question time in the Commons to offer unequivocal support for allied air strikes without further warning. British Tornado fighter aircraft based in the Middle East are expected to play a minor secondary role in the event of punitive air raids.



United Nations weapons inspectors evacuate their headquarters in Baghdad yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: KAFK SAHIB

strikes in view of widespread Palestinian sympathy for Iraq. While the air strikes planned in November and December have been sustained over weeks, any raids on this occasion could be curtailed by the imminence of Ramadan.

At the UN yesterday, Russia launched a furious attack on the UN's chairman, Richard Butler, for the negative tone of his report and for his decision to withdraw his inspectors without consulting the UN Security Council.

Sergei Lavrov, the Russian ambassador, called Mr Butler's report "outrageous", adding that if the UNSCOM chairman felt unable to do his job in Iraq, then he should look for another one. In his report, Mr Butler concluded that UNSCOM "is not able to conduct the sub-

stantive disarmament work mandated to it by the security council". No last-minute UN move was expected last night and Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, was last night rounding up support within the European Union where early hostility to bombing raids has receded in the face of Iraqi evasions.

Attack may delay US vote

Martin Kettle
in Washington

A LAST-MINUTE stay of execution in the impeachment crisis was dramatically on offer to President Clinton last night as Congressional leaders considered postponing the vote on the president's future until the latest Gulf crisis is resolved.

With the House of Representatives scheduled to vote on four impeachment charges today, the Republican House Speaker-elect, Bob Livingston, and his Democratic opposite number, Richard Gephardt, were reported to have reached "tentative agreement" to postpone the vote in the event of US military action against Iraq.

As the day wore on, Mr Clinton's impeachment had seemed to become a near certainty with previously undecided Republicans continuing to come out in favour of the four charges against him. Postponement could pose organisational headaches for politicians on Capitol Hill, with the Christmas and New Year holidays imminent and

the current Congress due to be replaced on January 2. But the mood in Washington suggested that war would take priority over the first presidential impeachment debate in the Congress since 1868.

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Sketch

Let your fingers do the war-making



Simon Hoggart

THE House of Commons went on to a war footing yesterday. In the past, this event came every few decades. Now it happens most weeks.

There is a ritual to these occasions. Mr Blair speaks slowly and solemnly. You can tell it's important because he uses the full range of hand gestures, as if his digital dexterity were enough to terrify Saddam into submission.

There is the claw, in which the fingers stretch out and land on the despatch box like a crab descending on a bottom-feeding fish. There is the fist, which thumps down with a stabbing motion, as if the hand were grasping the handle of a knife.

Then there is the stiletto, where the right hand is clenched but the index finger is held down on his notes. And finally, the pet-a-cake, in which the hand is stretched out flat, descending gently but firmly on to the box, as if he were making sandcastles on the beach.

All these gestures were used many times. If Mr Blair had had a strong light behind him, the silhouette of a rabbit might have appeared on the opposite wall.

By tradition, it is the Leader of the Opposition who begins the war-making ritual, as firmly established as the Maori haka which the All Blacks use to scare their opponents. Mr Hague stands up and instead of producing his usual sarcastic sound bite kicks into elder statesman mode.

"Can I assure you of our full support for the use of military action in the days ahead, provided that action has clear and achievable objectives," he said yesterday with outward solemnity.

It was the same tone of voice politicians have always used to send young men off to die, though slightly disconcerting

to see it from someone who, until so very recently, was in short trousers himself. The Prime Minister then replies with the charge sheet, the longer the better, so that MPs can nod gravely at the gravity of Saddam's offences and their own wisdom for bringing him to account.

Mr Blair finishes by thanking the Opposition for their support. At this point, Mr Tony Benn is called to move the formal note of discord. Bombing would be contrary to the UN Charter, he tells us. He goes on to add that it would be illegal in international law, would inflame the Middle East, and would cause the death of many innocent people — "300,000 of which were killed in the last Gulf war".

(I know these views will be echoed by many Guardian readers. However, I should point out that Mr Benn's statistics are sometimes not entirely reliable. During the build-up to the last Gulf war I found myself in a TV studio with him and Norman Stone. Mr Benn is a teetotaler, and Professor Stone is not; indeed he had clearly been, for some time, what some of his Scottish compatriots describe as "sociable".

Mr Benn announced that some enormous number of civilians had already been killed by cruise missiles. Prof Stone demanded his source, and Mr Benn named "a reliable German newspaper".

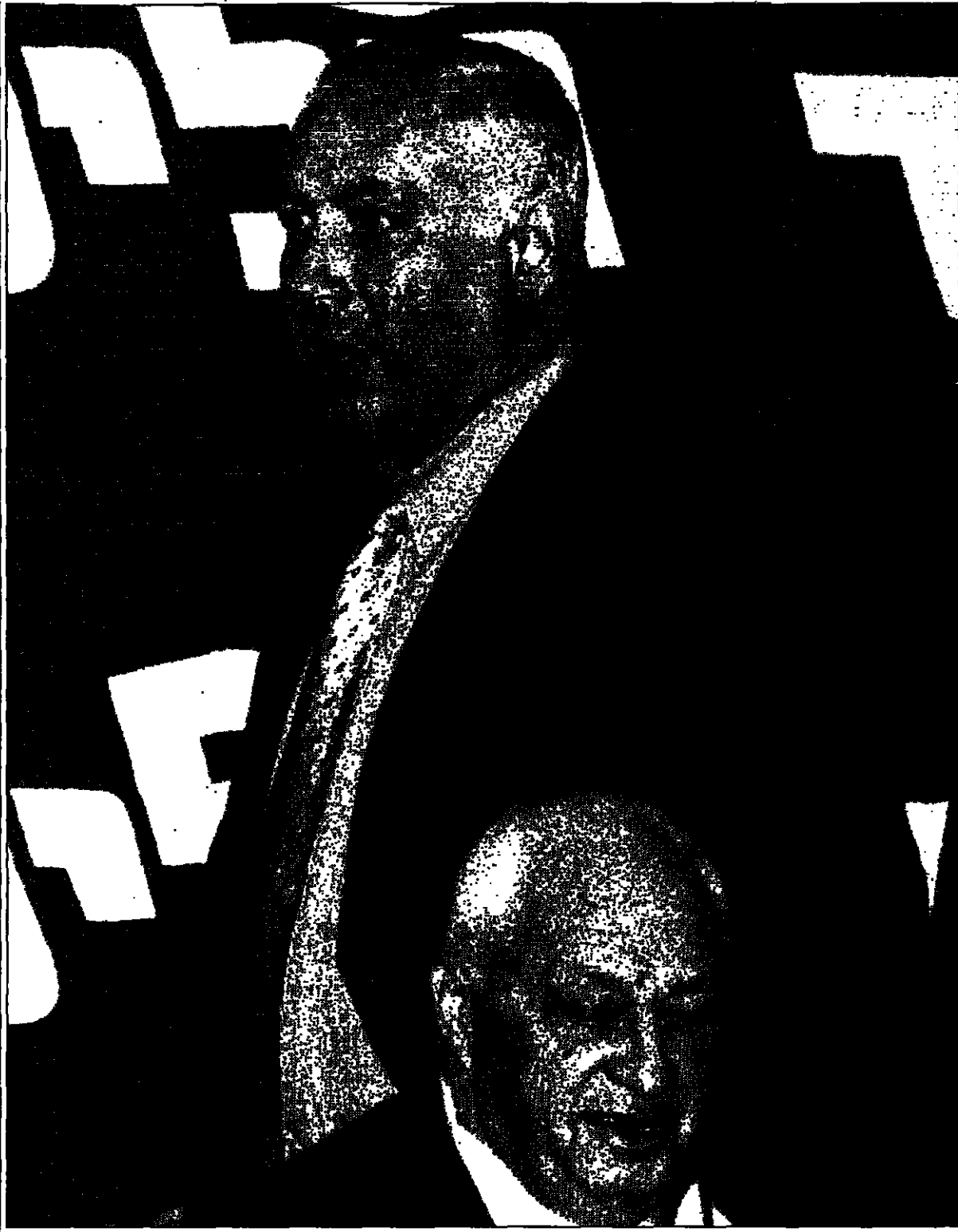
The professor roared, socially. "I read the entire German press, every day, and I have never even heard of that newspaper!" he shouted. Mr Benn resumed a thoughtful silence.)

Yesterday Mr Benn concluded: "Why do you do everything you are told by President Clinton, instead of... supporting the charter, which has always been central to the policy of the party that you lead?"

Ah, the party that Mr Blair leads! Now what would its name be again?

The Prime Minister replied with his usual courtesy. Past Labour leaders loathed and detested Mr Benn, and could barely speak to him through their clenched teeth.

It is a sign of his diminished influence that Mr Blair seems to find the task perfectly simple.



Benjamin Netanyahu on his way to announcing his ultimatum in Tel Aviv yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH BY SVEN NACKSTRAND

Netanyahu threatens poll over stalled peace

Bene Prusher in Jerusalem

THE Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, yesterday announced that he might have to dissolve his government and call fresh elections, threatening further delays to the Middle East peace process and freeing troop withdrawals from the West Bank.

Unable to sustain support for the hardline stance he is taking against the Palestinians, Mr Netanyahu has recognised that he will have to end the country to the polls in the hope of establishing a new coalition more in tune with his policies.

There was speculation he would ask the opposition Labour party to join him in a national unity government. "I'm calling on not only members of the coalition but also members of the Labour party to support these decisions. These are what is needed by Israel at this time," Mr Netanyahu said yesterday, pleading for support of his decision to freeze Israeli implementation of the Wye River accord.

Labour has scoffed at suggestions of such a power-sharing scheme unless Mr Netanyahu adopts a much more conciliatory position in negotiations.

Despite a visit to the region this week by President Bill Clinton, crowned by the United States leader's appearance at an assembly of more than 1,000 Palestinians who agreed to annul clauses of their charter calling for Israel's destruction, Mr Netanyahu said he would not withdraw troops from another portion of the West Bank tomorrow. Though the land handover is stipulated in the Wye accord timetable, Mr Netanyahu said the Palestinians had failed to fight terrorism and collect illegal arms.

"If there is not the necessary majority to support this [position], I will initiate new elections. In order to get a mandate from the people to achieve real peace," the prime minister said.

On the heels of a difficult visit with Mr Clinton, Mr Netanyahu faces a crisis set to erupt on Monday: a no-confidence motion in the Knesset. Though it is not the first time he has faced such a vote, his parliamentary bloc is more in danger of collapse than it has been since he won power in May 1996.

Not only is he under attack from his natural foes in the Labour party and the rest of the peace camp, he is also facing revolt from within. While far-right members of his cabinet say they will withdraw their support if he turns over even one more inch of West Bank territory, centrist partners are upset with the combative position he has taken against the Palestinians.

Mr Netanyahu's decision was spurred by the resignation of his finance minister and the public mutings by his popular and moderate defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, that he, too, might leave the government.

Mr Mordechai was reportedly angry at Mr Netanyahu's decision to stop all peace moves even after the Palestinians changed their covenant.

Analysts say Mr Netanyahu is effectively paralysed as he tries to please those who want to continue the peace process and those who are looking for excuses to end it.

"Netanyahu is now a lame duck prime minister because there is no way that his coalition can cross the May 4 deadline," says Menachem Horowitz, a political scientist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was referring to the date on which the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, has said he will unilaterally declare a Palestinian state.

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo and Tim Radford in London

SOUTH Korean scientists yesterday claimed to have taken the first steps towards cloning a human being.

They provoked worldwide alarm by taking the technique that led last year to Dolly the sheep, cloned from a "mother" six years older by scientists at the Roslin Institute in Scotland — and applying it to a human cell and egg.

Researchers in Britain, Japan and the United States have cloned sheep, mice and cattle from adult cells. There are no federal funds for human embryo research in the US and embryo experiments in Britain are strictly controlled. The Roslin team has repeatedly ruled out the idea of cloning human babies. It has described the idea as repugnant and dangerous. It took more than 200 attempts to produce Dolly.

But yesterday Lee Bo-yeon, of Kyunghee University in Seoul, said his team had cultivated a human embryo in its early stage from a single cell implanted in a woman's ovum. The operation was aborted long before the fertilised egg reached the foetus stage, to stay within guidelines established in Korea in 1995.

"Our experiment marked the first time the more reliable cloning technology has been applied to human cells and

might make human cloning more feasible," Dr Lee said. The Korean researchers immediately triggered a barrage of condemnation — and of doubt. Protesters in Seoul called the research inhuman. Yukio Tsunoda, the Japanese scientist who cloned twin calves, said: "I have never heard of such an experiment taking place and at the moment I don't believe it is true."

Harry Griffin, one of the team which produced Dolly, said the experiment was stopped before any proof had been established that the embryo had been reprogrammed. "We do not believe the Korean group has sufficient scientific evidence to back their claim of having cloned a human embryo," he said. He also reacted angrily to Korean claims that the Scottish scientists had already done the same thing. "We have done no research on cloning human cells."

Reactions to the technique might be used to clone humans were raised after Dolly was unveiled in February 1997, but some scientists have continued to argue that there might be a demand for human clones. Other researchers have argued that the technique could be used in the search for treatments for diseases.

A spokesman for Britain's Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority said the Korean research had not been submitted for review or published in a serious journal.

Scientists doubt baby clone claim

Attack may delay Clinton vote

continued from page 1

The White House responded angrily to Ms Fowler's suggestion. "The president of the United States makes national security decisions on the basis of the recommendations of his national security advisers and on the best interests of the people of the United States," press secretary Joe Lockhart said.

The talk of military action came as the votes continued to slip away from Mr Clinton yesterday. A fresh succession of previously uncommitted Republicans declared in favour of impeachment throughout yesterday, making it all but impossible for Mr Clinton to gather enough allies to overcome the Republicans' 228-207 majority in the House.

If it goes ahead today, the debate is likely to last most of the day and possibly spill into tomorrow, with the votes on

committing perjury, obstructing justice and corroding the rule of law," said Bob Ney of Ohio.

"I am convinced that in this case we do need impeachment as a shield to protect the integrity of our institutions," said another pro-impeachment declaimer, Sherwood Boehlert, of New York.

The White House's difficulties were compounded by the addition of liberal Californian Republican congressman Brian Bilbray to the list voting against Mr Clinton.

However, Congressman Michael Castle, of Delaware, spoke in favour of a censure-and-line Congressional resolution of the sort promoted on Tuesday by the former Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole.

Meanwhile, Vice-President Al Gore, who would succeed Mr Clinton if he was dis-

missed by the Senate, stood by his boss with a renewed plea for support.

"I believe on Capitol Hill there is still time for Democrats and Republicans to come together and embrace a bipartisan compromise to seek a resolution that is both quick and fair and try to turn away from the bitter partisanship that we have seen so far," he said.

Mr Gore cancelled a campaign trip to New Hampshire, where the first presidential primary is due to take place in 15 months time, to stay in the White House with Mr Clinton, who arrived back in Washington overnight after his trip to the Middle East.

Mr Clinton and his wife Hillary walked arm-in-arm down the steps from Air Force One after landing at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

FA's £3m was 'gift' to Wales, not loan

month, when he is expected to resign.

The Irish Football Association (IFA) claimed yesterday that both Mr Kelly and Mr Wiseman met them before last May's FA Cup Final to try to get their support for the election of an English candidate as FIFA vice-president, instead of a Scottish one.

The post holder is responsible for representing the four home countries and could prove to be an influential figure during the campaign to decide which country will host the World Cup.

David Bowen, head of the IFA, said that the meeting took place over dinner at a west London hotel but that he refused to change sides.

He said last night: "The question that I was asked was why are the Welsh getting development money from the FA when we in Northern Ireland are not?"

Meanwhile, the ramifications of the scandal continued to be felt throughout English football yesterday with questions being raised over the nature of the loan and England's credibility in trying to secure the 2006 World Cup.

Sports minister Tony Banks insisted yesterday that the FA loan scandal and the World Cup bid were separate issues.

He said: "It's now been turned into a 2006 story when it was about the internal workings of the Football Association. The idea that this has derailed the World Cup bid just exists in the rather lurid imaginations of some of these journalists."

David Davies, the FA's acting executive director, said: "Ultimately, the bid will be decided on where are the best facilities, which is the country that could stage the World Cup best — and FIFA said that only last night."

For some, however, the scandal may prove to be a blessing in disguise and may be the ideal opportunity to streamline the FA's top-heavy committee structure, which has in the past made it difficult to make decisions and implement them.

Sport, page 14

Review

Love, marriage and suffocation

Michael Billington

A Month in the Country

The Swan, Stratford-upon-Avon

PSYCHOLOGICAL drama or social comedy? Turgenev's only full-length play has elements of both. But in Brian Friel's free version and Michael Attenborough's new production it becomes a savagely sardonic comment on love and a natural companion-piece to the same company's *Troilus* and *Cressida*.

"All love is a catastrophe," cries Rakhitin, and so it seems when you look at the lousiest lives down on the Islayev country estate.

The key problem is that Islayev's wife, Natalya, is hopelessly in love with her son's young tutor. The consequences are disastrous. The briefly bewitched tutor flees back to Moscow. Natalya's 17-year-old ward, in love with him herself, agrees to marry an selfish, illiterate landowner, Rakhitin, the family friend who has long nursed a futile passion for Natalya. Finally packs his bags.

The only person who gains from this emotional tumult is the local doctor, who acquires three horses and a wagonette by acting as a squalid marriage-broker.

Stanislavsky claimed the play "is built on the most delicate curves of love experience". Soviet critics saw it as a portrait of a decaying downhill order going rapidly downhill. Friel's version treats it,

however, as an ironic picture of the chaos and confusion engendered by love. He even adds a speech at the end saying so. The problem with marital love, claims Natalya's mother-in-law, is that it rapidly becomes "another form of suffocation". The only happy ones in life are those who "love without reservation".

My own reservations about this production are very few. Friel spells out Turgenev's theme a little bluntly. And, as in his recent Dublin version of *Uncle Vanya*, he can't resist adding lots of jokes.

But the virtues of Attenborough's production is that it gets away from the old idea of the piece as sub-Chekhov played by supernumerary actors. Sara Stewart is a young, seductive, mad-about-the-boy Natalya driven to ratty fury by her impossible passion. Jack Tardion's tutor — Paris to her Helen in *Troilus* — is also a bit of a chancer who wouldn't mind a quick fling if circumstances permitted. Lloyd Hutchinson is also quite excellent as the buckster-doctor ready to sell Catherine Walker's betrayed ward down the river. And Sam Graham's Rakhitin is not so much the usual supercilious man in linen suit as a self-conscious lapdog who realises that "our lives dribble away in remorse".

Against Tom Piper's background of following white curtains, this is a sharp, stinging, totally unsentimental revival that captures exactly the torment and indignity of love.

This review appeared in some editions yesterday.

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THE CLAIMS:

Opinion pieces written under a false name at the height of the Bosnian war appeared to be part of an attempt to influence public opinion



Dominic Lawson: The Sunday Telegraph editor and former Spectator editor denies working for British Intelligence, despite being named in the Commons yesterday as a paid MI6 'asset' PHOTOGRAPH BY GARRY WEASER

The story of the spy and the Spectator

Richard Norton-Taylor

ARTICLES written by an MI6 officer under a false name were published in the Spectator magazine while Dominic Lawson was editor, the Guardian can disclose.

The articles, which included a bitter attack on British journalists, were written with a Sarajevo dateline under the name of Kenneth Roberts, during the civil war in Bosnia. The Spectator said at the end of the articles that the author's name "has been changed at his request". It did not say that the writer was an MI6 officer.

The Guardian yesterday faxed a series of detailed questions to Mr Lawson about the articles and their provenance. Last night he said: "You claim articles written by Kenneth Roberts were in fact written by an SIS [Secret Intelligence Service] officer. I have no means of knowing if you are right and, if you are, it is news to me."

The Foreign Office, which speaks on behalf of MI6, said it could not comment.

The MI6 articles appeared to be part of an attempt to influence public opinion during the Bosnian crisis by suggesting atrocities were being carried out by all sides — and not just Bosnian Serb troops.

Under Mr Lawson's editorship, the Spectator ran columns by Alan Judd, the alias of a senior MI6 officer who has left the service. It also claimed that Richard Gott, the Guardian's former literary editor, had been a KGB agent, which Mr Gott denied.

Mr Gott admitted he had accepted air tickets from the Russians and had told the security

services. He resigned immediately from the Guardian.

Two articles under the name of Kenneth Roberts were published in early 1994 — at the height of the civil war. In one article titled "Salvaging Conscience in Hampstead", Roberts is described as having worked "for the UN in Bosnia". He argued, it said, that "we should pull out now".

A month later, in March 1994, the MI6 officer wrote a second article under the heading, "Glamour Without Responsibility". In a passage now rich in irony, the Spectator noted: "Kenneth Roberts, who works with the UN forces in Bosnia, says that journalists there should be held accountable for their actions."

In a reference to Kate Adie, one of the BBC's most respected reporters, the author stated: "The power of the modern journalist, especially the television journalist, is nowhere more apparent than in Bosnia." He added: "Emotion rather than political or practical interest drives the public opinion that steels Western governments to send troops. Unlike those governments, the press has no proper accountability for the consequences of its actions."

He referred to two highly

controversial incidents during the Bosnian war — the attack on a bread queue in Sarajevo in 1992, and the attack on a Sarajevo market in 1994.

"For some time now," Roberts told Spectator readers, "there have been UN mutterings about the Muslims shelling their own people in bread queues or markets." Journalists were accused of failing to investigate claims by the Bosnia Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, that the 66 deaths at the market were due to a Muslim attack.

The suggestion was that the Muslims fired on their own people to provoke Nato into taking tougher action against the Serbs. Both the United Nations and the Tory government in Britain were desperate to counter reports in the British and US media of attacks on civilians by Bosnian Serbs.

Atrocities, they insisted, were being carried by all sides, by Muslims and Croats as well as Serbs.

Douglas Hurd, then foreign secretary, was deeply concerned about the prospect of what he called "the first muslim state in Europe". UN commanders were opposed to air strikes, arguing it would make it impossible to carry out their humanitarian mission.

GLAMOUR WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY

Kenneth Roberts, who works with the UN forces in Bosnia, says that journalists there should be held accountable for their actions

One of two Spectator articles written by 'Kenneth Roberts'

THE EDITOR: After three years at the helm of the Sunday Telegraph, the serious but shy man remains aloof among staff

Andrew Gillan

ABAR in Shoreditch was an unlikely place to find Dominic Lawson last night but that's where the editor of the Sunday Telegraph chose to throw a Christmas party for his staff and contributors.

As they sipped their champagne and nibbled on the canapés made by the Aga Khan's chef, the guests greeted the allegations that Lawson was an MI6 spook with much mirth and little

attribution. Even Lawson may have been making jokes about it. For the man many have described as aloof sometimes has a self-deprecating sense of humour.

Dominic Ralph Campden Lawson celebrates his 42nd birthday today amid a flurry of speculation about his involvement with the security service. The man who has been editor of the Sunday Telegraph since October 1995 would have probably preferred to mark the day some other way. Instead, he will no doubt be in the same type of crisis meetings that were held yesterday.

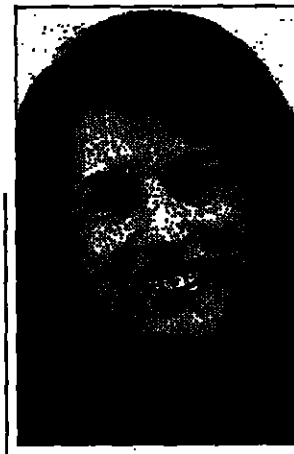
Lawson has always been a mischief-maker, famously making a secret tape of Nicholas Ridley ranting on about the Germans. The Tory minister was forced to resign two days later.

As editor of the Spectator for five years, Lawson raised

circulation and a few eyebrows beside: he was accused of sensationalising, even vulgarising, the genteel, conservative weekly.

Since his arrival at the 14th floor of Canary Wharf, Lawson has recast the newspaper. News stories are strong, colour writing is out, comment is driven and many think it is a better product for it. But a great deal of people at the paper have spoken about their editor's difficulties in dealing with them. Some have been reduced to tears, others dismissed.

Step into his office and it is immediately clear that the man described by his sister, the journalist Nigella Law-



Nigella Lawson: describes brother as 'talented bully'

son, as a "talented bully" with "unspeakable dress sense" is a dedicated family man. His walls are adorned by black and white portraits of his wife Rosa Monckton,

the managing director of Tiffany's, the Bond Street jewellers, and little drawings made by his children.

The couple's youngest child, Domenica, was born with Down's syndrome and Lawson has written passionately on the issue of abortion and his daughter's right to life.

Diana, Princess of Wales, was one of Domenica's six godparents and one of Ms Monckton's closest friends. In the months after her death, Lawson became increasingly concerned about the branding of the princess and wrote that she was being treated as a "mere commodity".

The son of Lord Lawson, the former Tory chancellor, he loves to keep his mark firmly on the paper and steer its agenda towards his own likes and dislikes.

The man who once said he had a "very good second rate mind", rather than a "first or third rate, reads almost all of

the copy that goes into the paper, each word on printed drafts because he feels disinclined to come to grips with the paper's antiquated computer system.

On a Tuesday morning he summons his reporters into his room at 11.15am and one by one asks what they will be working on that week. It fills the journalists with dread and the feeling that they are being summoned before the headmaster.

Sometimes Lawson is serious, sometimes he chortles away, sometimes he will knock a story down with a throwaway line like: "Do our readers really care about the poor?" Often, he plays to the old fogey stereotype that is his image.

Last night he would have had difficulty mingling — often his solitary figure can be seen sitting in the staff canteen because he is too shy to approach a table of reporters.

The covert cast of 'friends'

SPIES:

Intelligence officers rely on unofficial, undercover agents to use highly prized access to pass on information

Richard Norton-Taylor

FROM their lavish Terry Farrell-designed headquarters at Vauxhall Cross overlooking the Thames in central London, officers of the Secret Intelligence Service, more commonly known as MI6, run covert operations "in support" as the official Whitehall handbook puts it, "of Her Majesty's Government's security, defence, foreign and economic policies".

The handbook, Central Intelligence Machinery, blandly adds that MI6 uses "a variety of sources, human and technical". These include their opposite numbers and other well-placed individuals in foreign countries — friend and foe. They also include journalists, British businessmen, and even, on occasion, MPs.



MI6's lavish headquarters in central London

though officially only with the Foreign Secretary's approval. MI6 officers — or the "friends" as they are known in the Foreign Office — enjoy extraordinary freedom to bribe, seduce and cajole. The 1994 Intelligence Services Act protects them from liability for actions abroad which would be illegal in Britain.

Ministers have rubbished allegations that MI6 officers drew up plans to assassinate President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia and Libya's Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, but Richard Tomlinson and David Shayler, the former MI6 and MI5 officers now in exile, insist they are true.

In what used to be called the "great game", many governments tell each other the name of the chief official spy they have posted to each other's capitals. But the key to a foreign intelligence service's

work is access. That is why they use people MI6 calls approved "unofficial agents", "sleeper agents" or "sources" — working under cover as businessmen, for example — and why they have sometimes disguised their own officers as journalists, salesmen or United Nations officials.

And there are authorised and unauthorised operations. Foreign Office ministers did not know that Paul Henderson, managing director of the Matrix Churchill machine tool firm, passed information to MI6 about what Saddam Hussein was up to until Customs decided to prosecute him for allegedly breaching export controls.

This year Robin Cook went out of his way to praise the work of MI6 as well as GCHQ, the Government's eavesdropping centre. "They save lives by tracking terrorist groups

... They have played a crucial role in revealing Saddam Hussein's biological and chemical weapons programmes," the Foreign Secretary said.

Certainly, they have had successes — ironically, Mr Tomlinson was directly involved in some spectacular ones, including the disruption of a Middle Eastern country's chemical weapons procurement network and obtaining information about Russian weapons transfers.

A new book, Britain's Secret Propaganda War, 1948-1977, by Paul Lashmar and James Oliver, shows how MI6 was involved in planting information in both the foreign and British media with the help of the FO's covertly named Information Research Department, as well as undermining foreign governments, notably that of President Sukarno of Indonesia in the early 1960s.

This year the Government openly used information from MI6 and other intelligence agencies to publicise the atrocities of Saddam's regime. But MI6 also uses undercover methods to get articles published when there is no way of knowing whether they are true.

There is a difference between using information openly acknowledged to be from intelligence sources, and MI6 abusing journalists (and readers) to spread its propaganda with information that cannot be verified.

It must be worse when agents of intelligence agencies write articles for newspapers under aliases or when they go abroad under journalistic cover.

Consummate (kōn-sū-mā-tē) late ME. [- Fr. quintessence, quinte essence - med.L. quinta fifth essence.] 1. The 'fifth essence' of ancient philosophy, supposed to be the substance of which the heavenly bodies were composed. 2. The most refined essence of an older chemistry, an alcoholic tincture obtained by distillation. 3. The most perfect form of a thing. 4. The most perfect embodiment of persons, etc. 1590. 5. The highest perfection or quality of a certain class. 1570. 6. The most perfect form of a thing. 1570. 7. The most perfect embodiment of persons, etc. 1590. 8. The highest perfection or quality of a certain class. 1570. 9. The most perfect form of a thing. 1570. 10. The most perfect embodiment of persons, etc. 1590. 11. The highest perfection or quality of a certain class. 1570. 12. The most perfect form of a thing. 1570. 13. The most perfect embodiment of persons, etc. 1590. 14. The highest perfection or quality of a certain class. 1570. 15. 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The Quintessential Port.

Dr. J. H. H. H.

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The Guardian Thursday December 17 1998

BRITAIN 5



The Guardian's Christmas appeal offers readers the opportunity to donate to up to eight charities. Today **Amelia Gentleman** looks at the work of the Walsall Carers' Centre

Finding a life outside the daily struggle

RIS Ordridge has not had any sort of social life for almost 38 years. She reveals this casually and without resentment — this is the kind of sacrifice most full time carers have to make.

Now that she is over 70, she admits wistfully she would like to be able to go out for a meal or to the theatre occasionally, while she can. Instead she and her husband are effectively housebound, caring 24 hours a day for their son Kevin, born brain damaged by thalidomide.

Until recently they coped alone, struggling against the loneliness and the profound sense of isolation which inevitably accompany the responsibilities of full time caring — responsibilities which have been growing as the couple gets older.

"Very few of my neighbours will talk to Kevin in the street — which is very hurtful for both of us," she says. "We can go for months and months without anyone talk-

ing to him. They don't mean to be unkind, but they're embarrassed and ignore him."

"It has been hard because he can't communicate well. We have felt very isolated."

Studies regularly reveal that Britain's carers are over-worked and undervalued. Research suggests that carers save the National Health Service as much as £34 billion a year.

These people desperately need support, which is often best provided at grassroots level. The opening of the Walsall Carers' Centre two years ago has given local carers much-needed assistance and markedly improved the quality of the Ordridges' lives.

Monthly meetings there have put Mrs Ordridge in touch with other people who have devoted their lives to caring, and trained advisers have been offered help on where to find support.

Through the centre — a winner of the Guardian Jerwood Prize, based in a converted

church in Walsall, West Midlands — Mrs Ordridge met Shirley Molyneux, 61, a widow whose daughter Rachel, 21, suffers from cerebral palsy and also needs constant attention. The two have discovered that sharing their problems brings unexpected relief.

Full time caring is fraught with demanding responsibilities. These are pressures that can arrive suddenly, when a partner becomes ill or when a child is born with disabilities, or can creep up imperceptibly, as parents gradually become infirm or a debilitating disease grows more serious.

Like most carers, both play down the difficulties but admit it has not been easy.

"There are times when you get very wound up, when the person you are caring for has had a bad day, and has taken it out on you," Mrs Ordridge says. "I used to put my coat on and walk the streets, but coming here and talking to other people is a better way of winding down."

Mrs Molyneux adds that it took her years before she adapted to her life as a carer. "Before Rachel was born I was out almost every night. You do miss out on your social life, which is why this new centre has been good for us all," she said.

One of the fears they have in common is a growing anxiety about what will happen to their children when they are no longer able to devote their lives to them. Through the carers' centre they have been put in touch with experts and have begun to investigate the options.

"It is becoming harder to cope with Kevin and we have been extremely worried about what will happen to him after we're gone. Before this centre opened I wouldn't have known who to ask," Mrs Ordridge said.

Richard Hilton, co-ordinator of the Walsall Carers' Centre, stresses why the country's carers need support. "Carers are saving government a vast amount of money,

The charity

There are 6 million carers in Britain — approximately one in eight adults is a carer. About 750,000 people are responsible for looking after someone 24 hours a day.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers estimated that carers save the Government about £34 billion a year. Without them, the NHS and community care could not function.

In a survey, more than a third of carers reported that no one helped them to

look after their dependants.

Like other carers' centres across the country, the Walsall centre provides information, a listening ear, counselling and support; helps to find respite care or practical help in the home; and acts on behalf of the carer when negotiating with social services and other service providers.

Many full time carers are unaware of the support to which they are entitled. The centre seeks out carers

to tell them which services they should make use of.

Carers outside Walsall should contact the Princess Royal Trust for Carers on 0171 480 7788, who will put them in touch with one of the other 80 centres around the country.

"Every donation, no matter how modest, will help in our efforts to find more carers and provide them with the help and support they deserve," Richard Hilton, the centre's co-ordinator, says.



Iris Ordridge (left) and Shirley Molyneux, who both care for adult children at home

PHOTOGRAPH: MARK SCOTT

The Guardian Christmas Charity Appeal

To make a donation to the Guardian Christmas Charity Appeal phone with a credit or debit card or complete the form below

Call 0990 199 515

Calls cost less than a first class stamp

I wish to donate £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ Other £ _____ to the Guardian Christmas Charity Appeal.

I would like my donation to go to:

WaterAid ☐
Family Service Units ☐
Soil Association ☐
To be distributed between the five winning charities from the Guardian Jerwood Award ☐
To be distributed among the above ☐

Please include a cheque, CAF charity account cheque or postal order (made payable to the Guardian), or complete credit/debit card details below. Please note that we are unable to accept Switch payments.

Card number

Expiry date

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Ms Initial(s) _____

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Please tick box if you would like to receive information from the Guardian or the charities in this appeal ☐

Please send the completed coupon with your donation to: Guardian Christmas Charity Appeal, Speedmail, Unit B4, Galleyswall Trading Estate, Galleyswall Road, London, SE16 2BP

Please do not send cash. Please note that credit card donations incur a small bank charge that will be deducted from your donation. Calls charged at national rates. Lines are open 24 hours a day until 02:01:00

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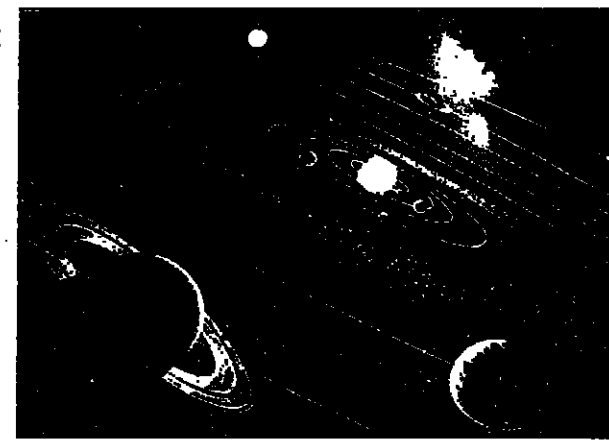


What's in

- Edward the Confessor building the first Westminster Abbey
- Michelangelo painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel
- Sir Walter Raleigh introducing the potato
- Shakespeare composing his sonnets
- The Earl of Sandwich making the sandwich
- Compassion of Florence Nightingale and, later, Mother Theresa
- John Logie Baird inventing television
- Moon landing (above)
- Fall of the Berlin wall
- End of Apartheid



The carved statues on Easter Island, which figure prominently in the commercial for the millennium celebrations



What's out

- Copernicus's cosmology in which the earth revolves around the sun (above)
- Newton's apple and the theory of gravity
- Darwin's Origin of Species and evolution
- The Industrial Revolution and the invention of the steam engine
- Magna Carta or the Battle of Hastings
- The arrival of ITV's News at Ten
- The Suffragettes and women's emancipation
- The explosion of the Internet

All in a day's work: packing 1,000 years into 10 minutes

Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

HUMANITY'S greatest achievements of the last 1,000 years have been summarised in a one-minute film as part of a 22 million advertising campaign for Britain's millennium celebrations. Set against the backdrop of

the sun rising and falling over the Easter Island statues, believed to be 1,000 years old themselves, the commercial tells the story of the last millennium as a series of 10 human achievements, as if they occurred in one day.

So, a voice-over by Jeremy Irons tells us that as the sun rises, Westminster Abbey was consecrated in 1065. Later in the morning, Michelangelo

completes the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and Sir Walter Raleigh handily brings the potato to Britain in time for lunch.

Perhaps the most surprising inclusion in the list is the invention of the sandwich — although the explanation might be the convenience of its coinciding with tea-time in the one day historical time-frame.

The Government-funded New Millennium Experience Company has spent months researching landmark events of the last 1,000 years, in order to compile a controversial top 10 list for the millennium.

Sholto Douglas-Horne, marketing director of the NMEC, said: "We want to spark a debate in the home and in the media. We are asking people

to reflect on all that has been achieved in the last 1,000 years, and we do not pretend our list is complete."

The commercial, which cost £250,000 to make, will be broadcast during the Christmas period, with the aim of provoking debate over what should have been included in the list of human achievements.

A spokesman for the New Millennium Experience Company, which commissioned the commercial from M & C Saatchi, said yesterday: "The idea is to get people thinking about the millennium as the next thousand years, not just the next hundred, and to imagine what can be achieved."

It is not, NMEC emphasised, an advertising campaign for the Greenwich

dome. A specific dome campaign will be launched in September, 1999.

The landmark events finally selected by the advertising agency had been rigorously market-researched from a longer list. Those left out include the signing of Magna Carta, the battle of Hastings, the efforts of the female suffragettes — and the launch of News at Ten. The

NMEC spokesman said that the 10 selected events aimed to reflect a spread of arts, sciences, invention, human achievement and important cultural developments around the world.

Six research groups had been asked to rate events in terms of their popular significance and to rate people in terms of their recognisable achievement.

Atom plants told to act on safety or risk disaster

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

NUCLEAR waste stored at 22 sites in the UK containing plutonium, the world's most dangerous substance, is in danger of leaking, the Government's safety experts say in an unpublished report. In one case, at Sellafield in Cumbria, there is a risk of an uncontrolled nuclear reaction.

Work costing more than £2 billion has been ordered to safeguard workers and the public from radioactive contamination at the British Nuclear Fuels plant at Sellafield.

All eight old Magnox nuclear

stations need remedial work, along with the nuclear weapons plant at Aldermaston in Berkshire and the UK Atomic Energy Authority site at Harwell in Oxfordshire, the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate says.

The report was ordered by the Health and Safety Executive into the condition of 70,000 cubic metres of what is known as intermediate level waste, or ILW. It is the legacy of Britain's nuclear weapons programme, nuclear reactor development, and reprocessing of spent fuel. Some of it as been in store 50 years.

Concern grew after the cancellation of the proposed nuclear waste repository at Sella-

field by John Gummer, when he was environment secretary. The report warns that stores containing plutonium waste are crumbling and some of the waste could explode — and, in one case, go "critical" — the technical term for an uncontrolled nuclear reaction like the disastrous one at Chernobyl in the Ukraine in 1986.

The Inspectorate's report is due to be published in January but a copy was placed in the House of Lords library after it was given to a Lords committee looking into nuclear waste.

At Sellafield, it says "some of the older facilities are in poor structural condition and not fit for their purpose". The rush to produce nuclear

weapons meant "waste management and environmental issues were low priorities... [leaving] a substantial legacy of raw, ie, untreated radioactive waste". The report reveals that there have been overheating problems due to hydrogen release and leakage of radioactive contaminated water into the ground. "Only 15 per cent of the raw ILW has been conditioned into a passive safe state."

The strongest concern is for plutonium-contaminated waste stored in 200 litre drums, filters, and crates in old and disused facilities. "The crates represent the greater potential hazard as in some cases the plutonium

content and form and internal geometry have never been established with any degree of confidence." Some buildings in which plutonium waste is stored are in such poor condition that "waste retrieval is an immediate priority". The Inspectorate estimates the life of the buildings to be five years.

In another building there are doubts about the strength of the roof beams holding a number of stainless steel tanks with liquid waste. "The large volumes of combustible radioactive waste in this facility present a significant potential hazard to the public, workforce, and the environment, and requires careful manage-

ment to ensure the risks continue to be acceptable."

The Inspectorate is also critical of nuclear waste stores at the Magnox stations recently taken over by BNFL and says new stores will have to be built at all eight. Radioactive sludge at Aldermaston also gives concern, because of potential leaks.

The privatised contractor Hunting-Brae has been asked to take urgent action. BNFL said in a statement: "We are aware that some of the waste needs urgent repackaging as the Inspectorate points out, we already have programmes to address this under way... We will work closely with the regulator to ensure the safety of retrieval operations."

Douglas Hogg claims Major 'ignored' BSE warnings

James Melkie

PRIME minister John Major and other cabinet ministers helped make the 1996 BSE crisis worse by refusing to implement sufficiently tough emergency measures, his former agriculture minister, Douglas Hogg, said yesterday.

He suggested that the 33-month export ban might have been avoided if permanent colleagues had accepted his programme, including a ban on all beef from cattle over 30 months old being allowed into food either at home or abroad.

A minute of one meeting

revealed that Mr Major "took the view... that the risk of contracting CJD was considerably less than the risks of contracting lung cancer, for example, but the government had not only failed to ban smoking it had failed to ban even the advertising of smoking."

Giving evidence at the BSE inquiry in south London, Mr Hogg said that because of opposition to his policy proposals from Mr Major and other cabinet colleagues, he had no option but to get on with the business of introducing the action chosen by them — even though he believed it was mistaken.

Dutch stance
 A few grumbling politicians have grumbled about the loss of sovereignty, but that is a small price to pay for the economic success ahead. They see the euro as the key to their future.

Many Dutchmen
 have grumbled about the loss of sovereignty, but that is a small price to pay for the economic success ahead. They see the euro as the key to their future.



Apart from a few grumbles about the cost, there is little opposition to the euro on the streets of Amsterdam

PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGE HERRINGSHAW



Continuing our series counting down to the launch of the European single currency, **Jon Henley** tests the water in Amsterdam

Birth of the euro

Even Queen Beatrix wants her face off the coins

FOUR hundred years ago Amsterdam was the proud capital of the wealthiest country on earth, a city awash with silks and spices brought home by merchants who had travelled the world. So great was the Netherlands' might that Samuel Pepys confided, rather indecately, to his diary: "Me-thinks, by God, the devil must shift Dutchmen."

That was a long time ago. Since then the Dutch have been trampled over many times by belligerent neighbours. In peace, they have tailored their ambitions to their more modest weight in the world, combining their mercantile tradition and the asset of their geographical position to become the middlemen for a continent.

The latest survey found that 74 per cent of the Dutch and 84 per cent of their companies are in favour of the euro.

"It's a very straightforward question, and just about every Dutch person realises it," said Ton Havermans, aged 39, an Amsterdam grain dealer. "We're a small country surrounded by bigger countries, so we've always been pro-Europe. But above all, we are a trading nation and a nation of pragmatists. It will be a hassle, but it will save us one hell of a lot of money."

Beatrix, their bicycle-riding queen, summed up what most Dutch think of the euro. In the cause of a single currency she said, she would be more than happy to see her face disappear from Dutch coins and banknotes. It is no accident that the two treaties that paved the way for the euro were signed in Maastricht and Amsterdam, or that the first governor of the European central bank, Wim Duisenberg, is a Dutchman.

And if the Dutch needed reminding of what is at stake, a government brochure spells it out: more than half of what the Netherlands produces each year is destined for export — two-thirds of it to members of the European Union — and two-thirds of its imports come from the EU.

In the Netherlands these days, they say, you make your money in Rotterdam, the world's largest port, talk about it in The Hague, and spend it in Amsterdam. On the chilly canalside streets of the capital,

outside the 17th-century merchants' houses long ago converted into beamed flats or prestigious offices, it is hard to find any spenders with a serious objection to the euro. But some have a few very Dutch grumbles.

"I'd like to know how much it's all going to cost us," said Marijke Andreas, a doctor's assistant, aged 28. "I know it's supposed to save us money in the end, but all the computers and cash dispensers and tills that have to be changed, even things like parking meters — I'll bet we'll end up paying."

Marc van der Pols, a 24-year-old law student, had more questions. "They're not exactly things I lose sleep over, but there's a lot we don't know yet: how much shops are going to round prices up by, how you'll be able to fill in a tax form in euros, even how you're supposed to write the euro symbol. I'll all take work."

The amount of work involved worries small businesses. Their association, MKB, has produced a 150-point checklist for firms, which includes details of accounting, automation, billing, taxation and giro payments. It has also advised them to start work now, even though many will not be affected for another three years. Although the international financial institutions will be dealing in euros, on paper at least, by January 1, it will be 2002 before the man in the European street has euros in his wallet.

"It is going to be a headache," said Wubbe van Oord, aged 48, who runs a grocery store. "At the moment, we can all continue to pay suppliers in guilders if we want until 2002. But my biggest worry is the time it will take customers to adjust."

In fact, about the biggest euro-debate in the Netherlands is about how the coins and bank-notes should be introduced when they come into circulation. The banks want a one-month overlap with the guilder, while retailers and small businesses insist on the euro and nothing but the euro from January 1.

"An overlap is pointless," said Mr van Oord. "There's such a publicity blitz around the euro that everyone knows what it is and how much it's worth already. By 2002, they'll just want to get on with it."

Why I hate the euro

Arjo Klamer, professor of cultural economics at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, is one of the few dissenting Dutch voices.

I AM against it because it is an anti-social and undemocratic project. There is a taboo here on talking negatively about the euro and European integration. What should have been a genuine debate has been stifled by this and previous governments.

It is anti-social because it favours banks and big business. And it is undemocratic because it is being rammed through with no real debate. The average Dutchman has no idea what is going on.

The euro is a political process that has to do with the



Klamer: Euro is anti-social relationship between France and Germany. I believe the euro has come too quickly. Europe is not ready.

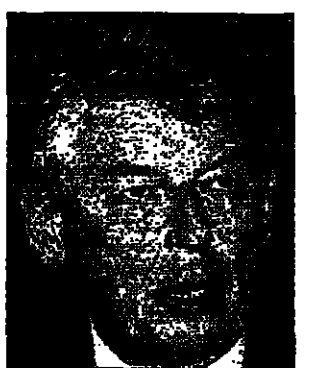
Why I love it

Prime minister Wim Kok, now in his second term, has never doubted the benefits of a single currency.

AS LONG ago as 1957, six European countries, including Holland, agreed to work together towards forming a common market. They realised that economic co-operation would reduce the chance of war and that trade would lead to prosperity.

Gradually, there was to be free and unhindered traffic of goods, services, people and capital. Those objectives have now been reached and the original group of six has become a European Union of 15.

The only remaining major barrier to trade within the European Union is exchange rate uncertainty and currency



Kok: Everyone will benefit costs. The euro will help remove this. Everyone — and especially the people of the Netherlands, with its economy so focused abroad — will benefit.

Wise men. (And women.) Follow the star.



Look out for special 24 packs of Hofmeister cans in

TESCO

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July 10 1999

Turks angry as Italian court frees Kurdish leader

John Hooper in Rome and Chris Morris in Ankara

ABDULLAH Ocalan, the Kurdish guerrilla leader whose arrest triggered a diplomatic crisis between Europe and Turkey, was freed by an Italian appeal court yesterday, to angry protests from Ankara.

The Italian prime minister, Massimo D'Alema, said Mr Ocalan would be kept under police surveillance and not allowed to leave Italy. "What happened this morning has not changed the scenario," he said, adding that a decision whether to try Mr Ocalan or expel him would be made within the next few days.

But the last thing the leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) wants is to leave Italy. The worry for the Kurdish separatists is that Rome will expel Mr Ocalan rather than give him asylum.

"He wants to initiate a political process together with the European Union," and he thinks that he stands a better chance of doing that in Italy," said a PKK spokesman.

Ocalan arrived in Italy on November 12 with two warrants outstanding against him: from Germany and Turkey. Turkey's request was rejected because Italy does not grant extradition to countries with the death penalty.

Yesterday the president of the court, Tommaso Figiuzzi, said the German warrant was not valid because Germany had replaced the original, international warrant with one that meant Mr Ocalan could be detained only if he went to Germany.

The Turkish government sought legal clarification of the decision. The defence minister, Ismet Sezgin, said that if Mr Ocalan had been freed with no conditions "then this is a desperate mistake".

"It will damage Turkey's relations with Italy and harm international law," he said.

He accused Italy of violating international conventions against terrorism and said he would raise the Ocalan issue at a meeting of Nato defence ministers in Brussels today.

Others in Brussels were more circumspect, awaiting

an explanation of exactly what the Italian decision means. Official sources described as encouraging a statement by the Italian foreign minister Lamberto Dini, that Mr Ocalan would either be put on trial or expelled from Italy.

But there was no disguising the bitterness in Ankara about Mr Ocalan's treatment since he arrived in Rome last month. "Even before this decision, he was effectively free any way," the deputy prime minister, Bulent Ecevit, said.

"It's not a surprise to us. He was free to talk to anyone and he has been living like a lord."

Mr Ocalan is wanted in Turkey on treason charges. He has said he would agree to stand trial if the international community also agreed to hold a conference to try to solve the Kurdish question and help find a peace settlement between Turkey and the Kurds.

Italy has asked for a European solution to the Ocalan issue and is seeking to have him tried under a 1972 European convention.



A relative of one of the victims is comforted as rescuers recover a body from the rubble

PHOTOGRAPH BY PIERO LEPI

30 feared dead in collapsed building

John Hooper in Rome

TWO people were found alive last night in the wreckage of a block of flats in Rome which appeared to have crumbled to the ground. Rescuers feared that the death toll could rise to more than 30.

Last night the state-owned radio network RAI reported that the number of confirmed deaths had reached 19.

The disaster occurred shortly after 3am. One witness said it sounded as if a bomb had gone off, but a fire services inspector, Liborio Pilato, ruled out any sort of blast.

Other rescue workers speculated that the five-storey block, which had a print works in the basement, may have collapsed because of structural weakness or land subsidence.

It was thought that about 35 people were asleep when the structure gave way.

A young firefighter collapsed in shock when his parents and one of his brothers were found dead in the rubble. Rescuers offered little hope of finding more survivors, but as dark fell a man and a woman, both thought to be in their sixties, were pulled out.



Leone Calvi by his brother Roberto's coffin yesterday

Police open tomb to solve mystery of 'God's banker'

Philip Willan in Drezno

THE sound of hammering echoed around a normally quiet village cemetery yesterday as the Italian authorities exhumed the body of Roberto Calvi, in an attempt to solve a 16-year-old mystery.

Known as "God's banker" for his close business relationship with the Vatican bank, Calvi was found hanging from scaffolding under Blackfriars Bridge in London on June 18 1982. Investigators hope an examination of the body, using the latest scientific techniques, will establish if he was murdered shortly before the collapse of the Banco Ambrosiano, Italy's largest private bank, of which he was chairman.

As workmen pried open the tomb, his son Carlo and brother Leone looked on, part of the group of officials, forensic scientists and police in Drezno, a picturesque hamlet near a hill-top which marks the border with Switzerland. The Calvis used to own a holiday home here and their private chapel housing the tomb is the most imposing in the cemetery.

The coffin was sealed before being driven to the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Milan. Experts are due to begin examining the body today but are not expected to reach any conclusions before Christmas.

The examination was ordered by Ottavio Lupacchini, a Rome judge. He declined to say what the experts would be looking for. But he has asked the experts to try to discover if Calvi was conscious when he was strung up under Blackfriars

Bridge. One of the experts, the anthropologist Luigi Capasso, has been working on the 5,000-year-old remains of Ötzi, the Iceman whose mummified body emerged seven years ago from an Alpine glacier.

The Calvi case has come to symbolise the complex web of intrigue that linked the Vatican to discredited politicians, unscrupulous businessmen and organised crime during the cold war years in Italy.

For Carlo Calvi, a Montreal-based financier, it was his first return to Drezno since the year his father died. "This is extremely traumatic from a human point of view, but it is a positive sign of judicial activism," he said. "I'm confident that a new autopsy will be useful, though the evidence of state witnesses still offers the most promising leads."

Former Mafia claim that Calvi was the victim of an alliance between Cosa Nostra, the Neapolitan Camorra and members of a Rome underworld grouping called the Magliana Band, because he had misappropriated Mafia funds.

But his son believes the real motive lay in political opposition to his father's rescue plan for the Banco Ambrosiano.

"The Magliana Band was the military arm of those who were opposed to my father," he said. "My father's death delayed the start of Italy's anti-corruption drive by about 12 years. His death sent out a clear message: Whoever was capable of shedding light on the ties between politics, business and organised crime decided it was better to remain silent."

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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

AT the BBC, mischievous rumours surround Cliff Richard. Cliff's television Christmas Special was recently cancelled after a fortune (possibly as much as £350,000; enough, anyway, for several new Range Rovers for Mrs Birt) had been spent. The official reason was a spot of laryngitis, but some suspect he became displeased with the peroxide tone the show was assuming. Whichever — and the BBC press office claims that it has merely been postponed and will be shown in the New Year — this was very fortunate for Cliff, who was desperate to plug his Christmas single now that no DJ will play his records. So the singer had his people contact Noel's House Party to offer his services. This offer was rejected, not because Noel Edmonds didn't want him — Mr Edmonds would put Arthur Askey's corpse on his show if he thought it would rescue his ratings — but because the BBC, furious at the waste of money, has imposed a blanket ban. Banned on radio, banned on television... how much longer can it be before Sir Cliff Richard becomes the next cult underground figure?

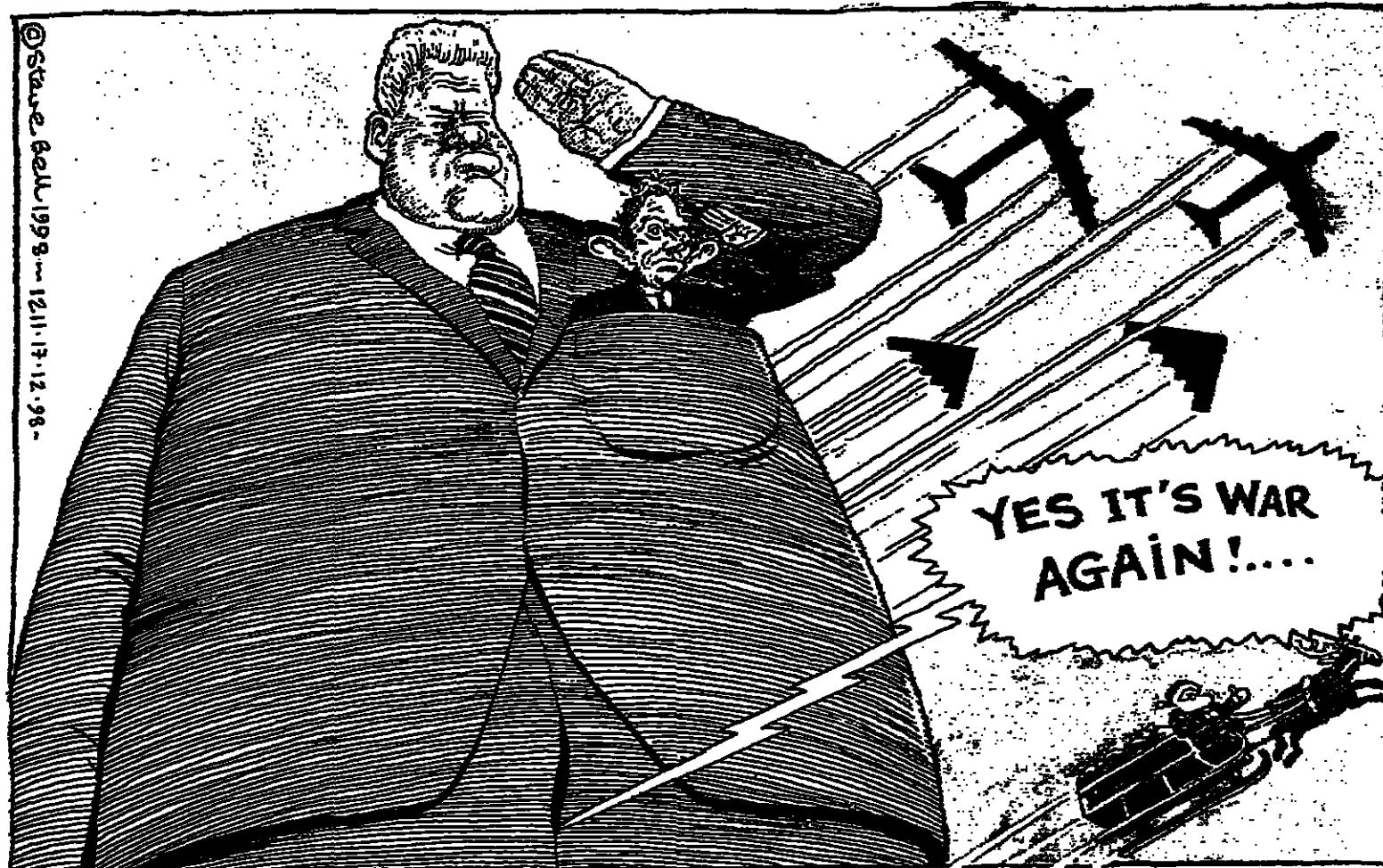
MEANWHILE, we hear yet another up-setting rumour about Sir Cliff. These days, it is claimed, whenever it begins to rain at one of his outdoor concerts, he starts playing tennis. Whatever is the matter with him?

FROM one knighted pop star with a gift for repulsively pious Christmas singles to another. So popular with a taxi firm used by the BBC is Bob Geldof, we gather, that of the 45 drivers on the books, no fewer than three will have him in the car. Oddly, this has nothing to do with Bob's arms length relationship with Mr Soap, but more his taxi etiquette. Bob's tactic when driven home to Chelsea from a studio, a driver explains, is to hang on to the cab for hours as he does a tour of designer shops to pick up clothes. The driver's job, meanwhile, is to give him the slip. "It's not as easy as it sounds," we are told. "He's a cunning bugger, and plans it so that we only drop him in busy one-way streets, so it's hard to get away. I once thought I'd made a clean break, but he came running after me and caught me at the traffic lights."

A LETTER to research staff from the office of likeable LibDem chief whip Paul Tyler, marked "strictly private and confidential", comes to our attention. It concerns the Christmas lunch at a restaurant near Waterloo called L'Anberge... "a fine Belgian establishment well known for the quality of the quality of the mussels" it entices. "It also has the huge appealing quality of being reasonably priced. Of course, should anyone ask, this meal will officially count as a business conference and strategy conference, and so claimable on expenses." Pants won't like it.

FOR all who have wondered what it might be that Virginia Bottomley has in common with her husband Peter, a clue came in the Independent's Saturday magazine, where the poor creature shared her thoughts on Christmas presents. "I do like giving and receiving presents," wrote Mrs Bottomley. "One year I bought all my family bird tables. Another year I bought them all hockey sticks." I see. A perfect match.

THANKS to Lysbeth Fox of the SPA Partnership for another late contender for Press Release of the Year headline: "Warning: turkeys can seriously damage your health." The document goes on to reveal that a "British Hernia Centre's report finds that domestic cooks are in danger at this time of year"... danger? The danger comes when the cook has "to bend or strain when manoeuvring the turkey from the refrigerator to the work surface, due to varying heights," such a strain possibly resulting in "potentially life threatening conditions such as strangulated hernias". We have been warned.



Tony and Bill would do better to play the long game with Saddam

Hugo Young



THE best guide to what may very soon happen in Iraq is supplied by what was meant to happen a month ago, before President Clinton called off the attack as the planes were in the air and the fingers on the button. After that onslaught was stood down, the Washington Post felt free to specify the nature of the campaign which official sources said had been averted.

The attacks would not, as thought before, be brief if brutally symbolic, such as happened in Sudan and Afghanistan. A "strike-pause-strike" option, mainly confined to cruise missiles, had been rejected. This time there would be a continuous series of raids, lasting "at least" several days, one-fifth of which would be carried out by British aircraft.

Though these would be targeted on chemical and biological warfare stockpiles, the Pentagon offered the prediction, "as a medium-term scenario", that they could kill 10,000 Iraqis, many of them civilians. Saddam Hussein, however, backed down, or said he had. Many US officials — Secretary Albright, Secretary Cohen, most of the relevant others — wanted to press ahead, but Clinton stepped away.

Among other things, it was said, he didn't want anyone to think he was gambling with international peace to ease his personal predicament at the hands of Kenneth Starr. The outcome was a relief to all concerned, so long as they were prepared to believe Saddam. For nobody could say what the bombing was certain, or even likely, to achieve.

In the last month, two factors in the equation have changed. First, with breath speed, Iraq broke every promise it made about the freedom of Uncom, the UN

arms inspection team, to do its work. Mr Blair told Parliament yesterday that the inspectors' impotence was now worse than before the November crisis.

Second, the apprehensions overhanging Clinton have changed as well. He seems a nearly broken man. In place of a leader suspected of baring his chest to divert attention from his other parts, we have one now in the grip of a frailty that's more alarming if the bombing starts, it will be controlled by a demoralised president, no longer the master of his own destiny.

The third factor, however, hasn't changed at all. It's still quite uncertain what the bombing will achieve, except the fulfilment of repeated threats that, if Saddam didn't comply with UN demands, he would face maximum punishment. Such fulfilment now seems unavoidable.

What would be left of Washington's, and compliant London's, reputation if it didn't happen? Secretary Cohen said last time: "No more hiding and seeking, no more playing of games." Prime Minister Blair said: "No warnings, no negotiations, no wrangling... the next withdrawal of co-operation and he will be hit."

Yet this offers an appalling prospect on several levels. The first is military. After nearly a year of preparation, the targets seem to be quite uncertain. If we doubted this, Mr Blair supplied the disarming evidence yesterday, when he said that a major counter-attack against Saddam's treatment of Uncom was his refusal to tell the inspection team the whereabouts of Iraq's stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.

Not only is pinpoint bombing an illusion, anyway, but the pin that's supposed to be pointed, we now know on high authority, is in many cases

not identifiable. Second, the political objective remains as desperate as it always was. Since the November non-event, there's been one development, in the form of a speech by Sandy Berger, the President's national security adviser. Last week, Mr Berger outlined what appeared to be an alternative to the strategy of containing Saddam, which was to work more purposefully to replace him. This flashed out Clinton's own ambition for "a new government" in Baghdad, and itemised the work Washington was doing to reconcile the two largest Kurdish groups, strengthen opposition forces, set up clandestine broadcasts and generally delegitimise a regime that is far worse than, for example, Pinochet's.

THERE'S much authority for the arduousness of this task. As long as Saddam lives, how could anyone expect it to be consummated? But equally, if November's promised blitz is finally carried out, can anyone imagine it is certain, or even probable, that Iraq's beleaguered national psyche is more likely to fall apart than to gather round the leader who has proscribed himself into the status of the irreplacable national icon?

The case for the bombing is that, politically, Saddam does not have a leg to stand on. He has defied a world community that only reluctantly assembles a united will to say that he must be resisted. Before the November non-event, this will finally expressed itself.

But within a month, Uncom has been reminded of what its former leader, Rolf Ekens, last year described as the inspectors' plight: "We are nothing in Baghdad, we are at their complete mercy. They can just stop our work

at any time." Since this work, the identifying and elimination of weapons of mass destruction, is vital to the peace of the region, Saddam surely cannot be permitted to hold the region and the world to ransom by his contemptuous resistance: not to mention holding his own country in a state of cruel penury, under sanctions he alone has the power to lift.

The case against the bombing, however, rests on considerations of exactness and proportionality. Will the envisaged blitz eliminate the weapons? Is the massive collateral damage likely to include the elimination of Saddam himself?

Is this the best or only way to achieve that desirable end? Or is it about to happen essentially as the climax of a rhetorical escalation that has been more mindful of the need to preserve the face and prove the will of the US and UN, than of the terrible damage likely to be inflicted on innocent Iraqis?

Uncom forced Iraq to destroy 40,000 chemical weapons, 700 tons of chemical weapons agents, 48 operational missiles, a massive anthrax-production plant, a nuclear centrifuge programme, and at least 30 CBW warheads.

There are certainly more weapons. But could Iraq ever use them? Saddam knows that if he did, massive retaliation would get unequivocal world support. They are hideous, but also just about as unusable as the British nuclear deterrent.

Going to war to obliterate them, therefore, seems in all the circumstances an option which Mr Clinton and Mr Blair have been foolish to render the exclusive choice that can save the world order.

Even now, the long game would be the better part.

Commercial funding is compromising research

Integrity for sale

George Monbiot



ITHINK the vice-chancellors of Britain's universities were expecting to be congratulated when they announced this week that they would no longer take money for cancer research from the tobacco industry. Most people would surely wonder why on earth they were taking it in the first place.

Today, there is scarcely a science faculty in Britain whose academic freedom has not been compromised by its funding arrangements. Our research departments have been offered for sale, and objectivity and intellectual honesty are becoming surplus to requirements.

Take research into energy, for example. The sociologist David Whyte has shown how a prominent energy research faculty accepted falsified accident figures provided by an oil company in order to keep faith with its sponsors in the industry. He has seen how faculties taking oil money have deliberately played down the industry's long-term prospects, to help to persuade the Government not to increase taxes or to impose new health and safety regulations.

UNIVERSITIES tend to dismiss complaints like this, arguing that business funds only a small proportion of their research. Far more comes from the Government to foster an environment in which intellectual curiosity can wander unconstrained by commercial imperatives. That might once have been the case. But, since 1994, the Government has channelled an increasing proportion of its research budget through something called the Foresight Programme, whose purpose is to ensure that British science meets the needs of industry. Far from filling the gaps left by commercial funding, it boosts the research programmes most likely to receive business sponsorship.

Yesterday, Peter Mandelson launched his white paper on competitiveness, which will strengthen the links between science and business. On Tuesday, he extended the Foresight Programme. Science which cannot answer the immediate needs of commerce is in danger of extinction. The Foresight Programme scarcely pretends to promote either academic objectivity or the public interest. Its agriculture and forestry panel, which decides which faculties get government grants, is supposed to encourage research,

among other topics, into "the effects of land use on the environment" and rural employment. Yet, while the National Farmers' Union, The Pig Improvement Company and Zeneca Agrochemicals are all represented on the panel, it contains just one member of a university department and no one from a trades union, an environmental group or any other voluntary body.

Eight members of the Food and Drink Foresight panel come from food companies and trade bodies, and two from universities. It has decided that its duties include "demonstrating the health benefits to the consumer of new technologies employed — for example, genetic modification". Its sub-group on alcohol wants to "guide... consumers" towards an "understanding of the risks and benefits of components of fermented drinks, including alcohol". Doctors and health charities might wonder whether alcohol has any medical benefits, but a regrettable oversight ensured that they weren't able to contribute: the Foresight report on the funding of alcohol research emerged from a consultation with five trade bodies and 15 drinks companies.

The Foresight Programme, the Government assures us, is just one component of its science funding. The Research Councils, by contrast, exist to ensure that the majority of government funding is untainted by commercial interests. Perhaps we could invest rather more faith in its assurances, were the director-general of the Research Councils not the former research director of BP, or the Science Minister the former chief executive of Sainsbury's.

Business now stands as a guard dog at the gates of perception

Lord Sainsbury's task is to ensure that science funding reflects the needs of science, rather than just industry, but, according to the Department of Trade and Industry's website, he also chairs the "Food Chain Group", whose purpose is to ensure that government funding for science reflects the special needs of the food industry. A Sainsbury's representative sits on the Food and Drink Foresight panel. Sainsbury's is funding the public consultation Peter Mandelson launched this week, whose purpose is to see whether ordinary people feel that British science is representing their interests.

Science tells us who we are and how we can live better. It is the medium through which we perceive the world. But business now stands as a guard dog at the gates of perception. It may be that only the inquiries which suit its needs will be allowed to pass.

It is consumers, not scientists Blair should be listening to on the subject of genetically engineered food

Bad taste

Peter Melchett

AT a seminar on science this week, Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson and David Blunkett were told that genetic engineering represents "opportunities to be seized" and that they should beware of "bio-fundamentalists". As the only "bio-fundamentalist" present, I said that industry and UK government scientists were not trusted by the public — and for good reason. In crucial areas such as food — from pesticides to mad cow disease — they've simply got it wrong. Chatham House rules prevent other comments being attributed.

Throughout the last 50 years, the Government has poured millions of pounds into intensive, industrialised food production. The problems that Rachel Carson highlighted in her book, *Silent Spring*, should have

forewarned us of the disasters to follow — the stripping of nature from the face of our countryside, the revolting cruelty of industrialised livestock farming, culminating in the catastrophe of mad cow disease.

At the seminar, it was clear that, 20 years later, nothing has fundamentally changed. The agenda of official British science is still dominated by the old-fashioned mindset that big is best, and that the more intense our manipulation or interference with nature through science, the better the outcome will be.

Environmentalists are enthusiasts for science, which plays a crucial role in identifying environmental problems like damage to the ozone layer and climate change. But scientific policy advice given to politicians comes from a tightly drawn "inner circle". Although knowledgeable in their

fields, these "experts" have often proved to be incapable of appreciating how the real world works (as with BSE), and equally incapable of taking seriously issues that matter to the public (cows shouldn't eat cows).

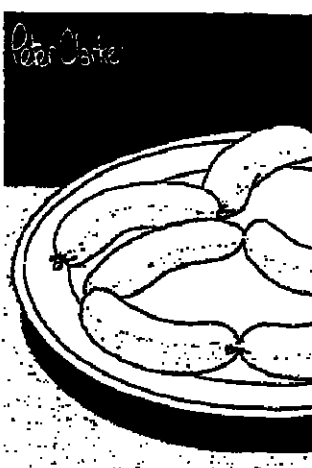
In the UK, there is a strong presumption that the comfortable smoking-room consensus among elite decision-makers is automatically right. They even fail to ask the right questions, let alone provide sensible answers.

THE seminar was dominated by genetic engineering. This new technology involves even greater conflict with natural systems than the industrialised agriculture it builds on. It is now the dominant force in British science. Most of the scientists seemed to want the Government to treat applications of genetic engineering in food and in

medicine in the same way. The public see them quite differently. Buying food for your family and getting a prescription from your doctor are not the same, whatever the genetic engineering enthusiasts may say. Someone who is ill, and voluntarily takes something to make them better, chooses to take a risk explained to them, for a clear, hoped-for, personal benefit. None of this applies to genetically engineered food.

The Prime Minister was given some very unsolicited speculation, for example, that genetic engineering is needed to feed the world's growing population. There is no evidence for this, and a study, just reported in *Nature*, found that the positive alternatives of organic agriculture can "produce equivalent crop yields to conventional methods". Science has a role to play in decisions about food pro-

duction. But as a Government Research Council group of scientists said of the arguments about dumping the Brent Spar: "Any decision to proceed, or not to proceed, with such activities involves social, economic, ethical and aesthetic considerations which are outside the competence of the group, and judgments in which the technical assessment of the environmental impacts is only one factor, and not necessarily the most important one." The decision on whether to proceed with



genetically engineered food also involves social, economic, ethical and aesthetic considerations — and questions about need, who benefits, and questions about the unpredictable and the unknowable. Above all, if it is to represent the public interest, Government must listen to environmentalists, non-establishment scientists and the public, who just do not wait at all. In saying some of this to Tony Blair, I was accused of exaggerating to make a point. But my overwhelming impression was that the Prime Minister and his colleagues, like their predecessors over the last 50 years, were being presented with a easy consensus, which ignored overwhelming public concerns, and establishment science's record of failure, not success.

Lord Melchett is executive director of Greenpeace UK

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Bombing Iraq

The aim is to help Iraqis

AN AIR campaign against Iraq could well be under way by the time readers pick up this newspaper. America must respond to Saddam's deliberate flouting of the UN Special Commission, it has in place the military forces to do so, and it will undoubtedly be concerned to avoid a strategically timed Iraqi offer to resume compliance with the UN inspectors like the one which averted bombing a month ago. UN personnel in Iraq have either already left or are on their way out of the country. Even if the planes and missiles do not go in so quickly, the chances are that the bombing will come soon, in the narrow envelope between impeachment moves in Washington and the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. At the very least, the threat will remain and could become a reality at any moment in the coming days or weeks.

It is undoubtedly a hideous thing to contemplate the systematic bombardment of targets in Iraq, a bombardment which would certainly take innocent lives and take them in a society already gravely damaged by years of war followed by years of sanctions and isolation. Saddam Hussein has a genius for presenting both his enemies and those who pass for his friends with unpleasant choices. The initial responses to this latest crisis showed the same pattern evident in the two earlier emergencies this year. The Americans and the British show a readiness to deal with Saddam militarily, but this masks doubts about where such

action might lead. The Russians and the French agree there has been serious obstruction of the UN inspectors but are still against a military strike. Middle Eastern governments keep both their doubts and their desires hidden, but undoubtedly know that an air campaign could produce extreme reactions on the streets of their capitals. The United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, who has twice headed off a military confrontation, almost certainly would like to do so again, but Saddam's cavalier treatment of the inspectors, after Annan twice put his own prestige on the line, makes it hard for him to intervene once more.

What has changed since the last crisis is that the United States and Britain have manifested a new and more public determination to bring down Saddam. As Samuel Berger, President Clinton's assistant for National Security Affairs, put it in a recent speech, "Our policy... is to contain Saddam, but also to oppose him". Mr Berger went on to outline a long term policy to strengthen the Iraqi opposition and undermine the Iraqi dictator. By striking at such targets as Saddam's palaces, military installations, and intelligence establishments, a bombing campaign could conceivably precipitate a coup against him either from his own inner circle or from the officer corps. If bombing did not have such immediate effects, it would certainly limit his reach and control in the country. Yet bombing also carries large risks. Saddam will protect targets like the palaces by inducing civilians to converge on them. He could conceivably have, and it is just conceivable he might use, chemical or biological weapons which the UN inspectors have failed to find. He might be able, as before, to turn on rebels trying to seize the opportunity provided by an air campaign and deal them savage blows. And what happens if, after a

sustained campaign, no weakening of the regime is evident? Would we just go on bombing? These are difficult questions. Saddam enjoys no true loyalty among Iraqis, except perhaps in his home region of Tikrit. As far as their feelings can be determined, Iraqis blame both Saddam and the West for their dismal situation, to which they desperately crave an end. Bombing will only be justified, for us and for them, if it clearly contributes to that outcome.

Growing success

Mandelson makes the right noises

IT IS DIFFICULT to fault Peter Mandelson's competitiveness white paper. It contains dozens of worthwhile initiatives from a £150 million Enterprise Fund to grow more entrepreneurs to Lord Sainsbury's study to tackle barriers to growth in biotechnology. It addresses fundamental structural problems in the UK economy — like lack of enterprise in exploitation of our science and knowledge base and our slowness to harness the awesome commercial possibilities of the internet. The UK has been one of the most successful inventors yet a bad exploiter. Mr Mandelson's white paper is doubly welcome because he believes in what he is proposing and as a doer rather than a passive minister he has a better chance of success than many of his predecessors.

The paper (inspired by Silicon Valley rather than Europe) was so sensible that the shadow secretary, John Redwood, had to take refuge in complaining about policies not in it, like the minimum wage, working regulations and higher taxation.

When Michael Heseltine was the Conservative secretary of state he too produced annual competitiveness documents includ-

ing worthwhile initiatives — like one-stop shops for business advice — but the productivity gap with other countries is as wide as ever. This is due to two factors: the deep cultural problems that have to be solved before California-style entrepreneurs start sprouting and, second, the difficulty of translating worthy white papers into increases in GDP. No one really knows why the technological exploitation of the internet — hardware and software — has become virtually an American monopoly. Nor whether it is possible to challenge it, except in niche markets.

Government can do two really important things. First, create the conditions in which people with ideas have the chance to start businesses even though, inevitably, many will fail. Second, even more important, provide a steady macro-economic framework avoiding the unexpected recessions that kill off so many budding companies, leaving banks nursing losses. A vital part of that stability is commitment to a competitive exchange rate so companies can plan knowing their products won't be priced out of the market by an overvalued pound. No industry secretary has dared to become the public champion of a competitive pound. If they had, we wouldn't now be worrying whether we face another avoidable recession. It remains to be seen whether Mr Mandelson rises to the occasion.

Spot the tune

Whose music's in the air?

WORLD-FAMOUS popular musicians did it, even Wolfgang Amadeus did it, let's do it, let's play a tune out of the air and forget — for who can remember the provenance of a melody — who first wrote it down. (Cole

Porter, in case you were wondering.) Andrew Lloyd Webber didn't do it, though he had to bear the cost of a trip to New York and district court lawyers' fees to defend himself against the claim, which had been lodged by a Baltimore man who writes songs in his spare time and said the title song to Phantom of the Opera was his. Lord Lloyd Webber of Sydmonton says such suits are apparently becoming more common. If true, that could imply there are lots more envious, obscure songwriters out there or, conceivably, that the realm of melody is shrinking and songs are starting to sound like one another.

There is a school of thought (though club might be a better word) impatient with tight definitions of ownership: it believes originality lies with the DJ who "samples". To sample is both to pass off someone else's work as your own and to fuse new (creative, ironically post-modern) sound worlds. Yet the activity turns out to have a long provenance. Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms were dab hands at embroidering variations on other composers' themes. We call Humperdinck "Wagnerian" as praise and then there are those wonderful and subversive renditions of Strauss (Johann) by the hard men of serialism. Finishing off a symphony by Elgar is to offer tribute, similar to dressing up like Bambi and Agatha and impersonating Abba, like Bjorn Again.

The trouble is, modern culture simultaneously puts a high value on originality while playing fast and loose with old ideas of ownership. In cyberspace the very idea of plagiarism becomes problematical — the Microsoft courts are grappling with who owns "original" computer code. And yet we still successfully apply tests of authenticity, especially to music. Can you hum it, whistle it, do it karaoke? On such criteria, don't cry for Lord Lloyd Webber.

Letters to the Editor

Victims of injustice

YOU suggested I had been "taught out for not declaring an offshore trust" (Points of order, December 15). This is simply untrue. The existence of the trust you are referring to was disclosed in the DTI press release at the time of my appointment as a minister in July. The question of declaration in the Lords register of interests was raised with the Judicial Office which replied that there was no need to do so. Lord Sainsbury, Department of Trade.

"[M] one of the miscarriage of justice victims Alan Rusbridger refers to hoping against hope for journalists to expose the injustice that has held me wrongfully in prison for the past 10 years (Skane on the Home page, 16 Dec 1998, p. 11). So there is no question about the integrity of Mr Rusbridger's comment that the Guardian has championed the corner of victims like me. I write from my cell to say the Guardian has given me hope by covering my case. Please don't give up on us. Raphael Rowe, RMP Kingston, Hants.

McDONALD'S is not the first to withdraw a product because of its use by drug dealers (McDonald's scraps plastic spoons, December 16). My local shop no longer stocks Kixite because heroin smokers found the silver foil of benefit. The Royal Mint must also take credit for removing 5p coins from circulation because these were discovered by dope dealers to weigh the same as a standard deal. Are we soon to see the demise of credit cards (cocaine abuse)? Where will it end? Smarties lids hold exactly 1g of powder. Jan Basarab, London.

S O Graham Kelly has resigned as chief executive of the FA (Report, December 16). Does this mean we get someone less miserable doing the FA Cup draw in January? Victor Meldrew perhaps? Dominic McKilroy, Eiland, W. Yorks.

Did your reporter know something we didn't (Why I love Graham Kelly, December 11). He will be the only sad football supporter today. Phil Ruston, Leighton Buzzard, Beds.

In the ghetto

YOU highlight an issue (Rural poor overtaken by desperate urban underclass, December 11) raised time and time again by African, South American and Asian Bishops at this summer's Lambeth Conference.

The UN report rightly points out the need for "more investment in infrastructure and more encouragement by the authorities to allow people to grow food in cities". But also, as the Lambeth Report will point out, we need to address the economic inequalities of the cities where we have "the sight of children picking over the rubbish tips

No joy for pensioners

PENSIONERS are angry. There's nothing in Darling's green paper (State pensions boost for low-paid, December 16) for pensioners, the majority of whom have incomes a few pounds above income support.

It's taken nearly two years of "review" to tell us the New Labour intends to follow the Conservatives' path to shift retirement provision to the private sector. This allegedly reduces government expenditure, though more will have to be spent on means-tested income support.

Retirement incomes have to come out of our pockets regardless of who the paymaster is. Surely, increasing contributions to proven and excellent value-for-money National Insurance basic and Serps pensions is a cheaper and more secure alternative to the proposed experimental stakeholder schemes?

Let's hope opposition to this green paper will grow not only from pensioners but from the working population who are tomorrow's pensioners. Joe Harris, National Pensioners Convention.

The EU's duty

ONE marvels at Messrs Harrison's and Knapp's choice of priority among transport fields to benefit from indirect subsidy to intra-EU air and sea travel via the profit margins of ports and carriers' duty-free trading (Letters, December 12). The run-down and congested state of movement in this country by rail and road has a far more deserving call on any transport-related financing.

As a frequent duty-free beneficiary, I see no justification for the largesse I get at the expense of taxpayers and consumers generally. Its operation distorts the lay-out and use of terminals and distracts from primacy of cabin safety en route. Arguments about jobs are merely circular. Money not spent on duty-free, or taken in tax and used on public services, would get reouted via demand into employment.

Years of consultation and argument went into the decision to end duty-free exemptions — an absurd black hole

in a free trade area and the single market within the EU. The behaviour of leaders of several governments in trying to duck into cheap populism. Raymond le Goy, Kent.

[H] OPE Mr Blair falls in his attempt to play the end of duty-free. The recent attack on an airline stewardess by a passenger wielding a vodka bottle link, the state pens and will continue to whither year on year and pensioners will most certainly not share in any prosperity. Quite the reverse.

There will be many, many pensioners who feel betrayed by this green paper and by this Government. In November 1997, Mr Blair went on television and asked to be trusted. The pensioners' reply will come to the strains of Colonel Bogey. There is undoubtedly a big battle ahead. Clifford Fuller, Gloucestershire Pensioners Forum.

Learned work

DAVID Stoll's earlier book on Guatemala, *Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala*, is a work of meticulous scholarship compiled among the Mayan Indians of Nebaj, one of the towns worst affected by army atrocities during the civil war, and reveals that the social issues underlying this conflict were far from being as simple as many commentators have been prepared to acknowledge (Writer of wrongs, December 16).

These people have suffered hideously, but if we are to help alleviate their misery we must first understand the true nature of their problems. Stoll's new book is surely part of this process.

Both the Guatemalan government and the Guerrilla Army of the Poor were outstretched attempting to impose their own solutions, so perhaps we should applaud Stoll for actually listening to the Indian people themselves. Andrew Short, London.

Festive spirit

MIGHT I add a footnote to Matthew Norman's diary item (December 16) about my "blistering row" with John Prescott and his staff?

I am not wholly surprised that an altercation with Mr Prescott and his staff over their decidedly high-handed attitude towards the press should make your columns: but I am sure my reaction — undeniably scatalogical though mild by comparison with Steve Bell's cartoons — to their unacceptable criticisms of the Telegraph caused less offence than you say.

A Christmas party was hardly a suitable occasion for

this Government. In November 1997, Mr Blair went on television and asked to be trusted. The pensioners' reply will come to the strains of Colonel Bogey. There is undoubtedly a big battle ahead. Clifford Fuller, Gloucestershire Pensioners Forum.

POLLY Toynbee (It's the new golden age, December 16) may be right about the contradictions of the proposals in this hotel, it was clearly the Royal Commission on the Care of the Elderly and Disabled but she misses the brutal implications of the current system.

For those of my mother's generation who have low pensions but some savings which are now being used to fund care, the political message is that you are a fool to save — just spend it now on the foreign holidays and consumer goods that your parents never had.

If we are not all part of the welfare state, the implications are that there will be none at all. Phil Molynaux, London.



Westminster spat continues

MELVYN Caplan, leader of the Westminster Council, seeks to dissolve the council of any blame regarding the Clarendon Court scandal (Letters, December 12). But regardless of whether Westminster housed any of its own families in this hotel, it was clearly the council's responsibility to ensure that this hotel was properly inspected and fit for habitation. This was a responsibility that Westminster repeatedly ducked, despite clear evidence of the appalling conditions. It took a long campaign led by Karen Buck, now applauded by the Ombudsman, before action was taken. Alan Lazarus, Leader of the Opposition, Westminster City Council.

WE ACT as solicitors to Dame Shirley Porter. We refer to your articles Council ignore family's plight (December 10) and Secret plan for pay-off (December 14). Your latest efforts to link every criticism of Westminster Council to Dame Shirley Porter's period as leader have led to distortions of the truth.

Your articles wrongly alleged that as a result of Westminster's policy of designating council housing for sale "the resulting homeless were

dumped either outside the borough or in places like Clarendon Court". Westminster never placed its homeless families in the Clarendon Court Hotel. It was other inner London Labour-run boroughs (such as Camden) which placed their homeless families in Westminster and in that location. Why have you not taken those councils to task for exporting their homeless, instead of criticising Westminster for trying to cope with problems not of its making? Alan Langbehn, Nicholson Graham & Jones.

SHELTER shares Council-ior Caplan's view that the law is inadequate to protect homeless families in bed and breakfast hotels from unhealthy and squalid living conditions. The Government is about to consult on a new national licensing scheme which we hope will place clear responsibilities on owners.

It is essential that the scheme covers premises like the Clarendon Court Hotel, at a time when more homeless people are being placed in bed and breakfast hotels because of a chronic shortage of affordable homes to rent. Chris Holmes, Director, Shelter.

What power?

SO glad you think the domination of this week's singles chart by women represents the successful rise of girl power over traditional bloke bands (Leader, December 16). In fact this indicates the opposite.

The endurance of girl groups (have you forgotten the Supremes or Bananarama?) simply means the boys can keep dominating the music industry by doing all the real work — playing instruments, writing music (how much of their own material did the Spice Girls write?) and get to look sexy playing their guitars — only having make-up as an optional extra.

And since when was the business of music production dominated by women?

I look forward to a time when the successors of groups such as Oasis, Radiohead, the Manics, Suede, Nirvana and the Stone Roses include a substantial number of women members — and not just as pretty singers crooning in front of all the ugly blokes. A J Goodwin, Oxford.

Figure it out

CLAIRE Phipps (How hard do MPs work? December 9) says that the Commons sat for only 86 days last year. This figure relates to the short 1996-97 parliamentary session from the autumn of 1996 to the general election in May 1997. It would be equally misleading to suggest the 541 days the House sat during the parliamentary session starting in May 1997 and finishing last month was typical.

In a normal calendar year the House sits for about 160 days — that is the average over the past 10 years. Your article does not give any measure of the length of the parliamentary day in the countries listed. For the past 10 years the House itself (not including committees in the morning) sat on average for eight and a half hours each day.

A survey by the Independent Senior Salaries Review Body in 1996 showed that MPs worked on average more than 70 hours a week when the House was sitting and 50 hours a week during recesses. Margaret Beckett MP, Privy Council Office.

'For the past 10 years the House sat on average eight and a half hours each day'

Margaret Beckett, Letters

Now Wales stakes a claim for its own Six O'Clock News

GUARDIAN readers could be forgiven for thinking that the campaign for an integrated BBC Six O'Clock News applies only to Scotland. James Cusick (G2, December 14) failed to mention the Broadcasting Council for Wales's own aspirations. Indeed, the London media generally has studiously ignored the Welsh dimension.

For the record, the council has welcomed the measures announced by the BBC's board of governors, especially the £6 million injection into BBC Wales for devolution coverage. But it still has reservations about the practicalities of the current proposals for the Six O'Clock News. The council will be closely monitoring its performance over the next 12 months. Phil Clark, Broadcasting Council for Wales.

JAMES Cusick's article demonstrates yet again the

fixation the London media has with Scotland's devolution without once considering the situation in Wales. I should like to point out that there was also a demand for a Welsh Six.

There is already a Welsh version of international and British news available, but only to a small percentage who watch the news on S4C. Outside London, BBC Wales in Cardiff is the biggest BBC centre in Britain.

Yet another example of the London-centred agenda happened last weekend. There were two European club Rugby Union competitions, yet there was no coverage or results on BBC 1 or BBC 2 news on Saturday evening.

I hope that all the London media will remember that there are more than two countries in the United Kingdom. D I Roberts, Denbighshire.

Alone but Traumatized



This is 'Pepper' — he is at our Sanctuary in Ireland but depressed and pining. His close friend 'Salt' was brutally slain. Youths got into the field and rode Salt until she dropped. Salt was beaten with an iron bar before the bar was thrust through her eye into her brain.

Please help us to stop this type of terrible cruelty and also to look after over 7,500 donkeys already rescued.

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The Most Reverend Henry McAdoe

The Church's one foundation

WHEN Bishop Henry McAdoe of the Church of Ireland left his home in the old palace at Kilkenny, the road to the station for his train to Dublin was lined with cheering men and women, most of them Roman Catholic. This Irish-speaking Bishop, who has died aged 91, was respected by the community, and he was an expert fly-fisher, always willing to share a pipe.

Though the Church of Ireland, of which he was bishop, was a minority in the town, he was looked upon with affection by the community which regretted his departure to be-

come Archbishop. The community felt one of their own was leaving. Henry Robert McAdoe was educated at Cork Grammar School and Mountjoy School in Dublin. He was ordained in 1939 and, while serving in various parishes, became a prolific author. He was recognised, with Archbishop Michael Stiers, as one of the leading scholars of his church. He read widely the Anglican Caroline Divines, especially Jeremy Taylor, the 17th-century Anglican thinker who had been imprisoned before becoming an Irish bishop. Like Taylor, McAdoe was tolerant, learned and devout, concerned with the Real Pres-

ence in the Eucharist. McAdoe expounded Anglicanism as a disciplined way of sacramental devotion, free from ecclesiastical dictation. He saw in Anglicanism a form of Christianity which was enthused with liberty, while being both catholic and reformed. His learning and temperament fitted him for the great task of his life — to become one of the chairmen of ARC, the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission which worked from 1967 to 1981. Here, for the first time since the split 400 years ago, representative scholars authorised by their churches met over a prolonged period to talk in friendship, faith and trust.

They concentrated on central issues, the sacraments, the ministry and authority. Their lengthy reports still lie on the tables of the churches. McAdoe believed the agreements would one day bridge the Reformation rift. A new language would enable the churches to express together the truths so dear to each of them. McAdoe led these meetings over the years with a group of international scholars in London, Venice, Malta and Windsor. He developed great skill as co-chairman with the Roman Catholic Bishop Alan Clark. He was confident that progress could be made and aided by his scholarship, linguistic abilities and concentration, a lan-

guage of convergence and ecumenical trust was found. He knew the agenda so well that he could watch every one's face and catch every nuance. He could be firm — almost a prince-bishop — able to silence even an American Jesuit or an Australian Archbishop. Himself an old-fashioned protestant High Churchman, he understood the antagonisms. Some of those round the table feared the ironic statements might be seen, by him, as treason to Rome and McAdoe might be in personal danger. Others greatly regretted the delays and hostility of the Vatican bureaucracy. Both McAdoe and

Clark were rightly awarded the Cross of Canterbury. With hindsight he felt Rome and the churches lost an opportunity. To his regret, fundamentalism was to grow within the institutions and there was less loyalty to the decisions of synods or bishops. In the mainstream churches, McAdoe lamented a reduction in the full-time ministry. The last of his books traced how tradition might have to be questioned to strengthen the ministry by the ordination of women. McAdoe's status within Anglicanism, for which he modestly enthused, depended in part on the fact that he was not English. He was not ap-

pointed by the English Establishment. He could make fun of the sectarianism of both Evangelicals and Catholics within the Church of England. Asked on a media occasion whether the Arctic agreement could help the Church of England he adopted a strong Irish brogue: "You will not be asking me as an Irishman that." He and his wife Leslie were witty and warm-hearted, and their home was a place of *foie de oie*. Irish culture delighted him and he was specially happy in Trinity College, Dublin. By being himself he was a focus of understanding. In his words: "Those who have worked at the coalface of Christian unity have soon dis-

Bishop McAdoe...
ecumenism in person

covered the paradox that the more truly they express in love their own tradition, the better they are able to understand in depth and to value the other tradition, with which they are in dialogue. Confrontational attitudes dissolve."

McAdoe was a great reconciler, recognised as a leader of sterling worth. He is survived by his wife and three children.

Alan Webster

The Most Rev Henry Robert McAdoe, archbishop, born January 10, 1916; died December 10, 1998

Jérôme Medrano

Day the circus left town

JÉRÔME Medrano, who has died aged 91, was the son of one of the greatest clowns of the late 19th century, Geronimo Medrano, whose persona "Boum-Boum" inspired painters and poets. For nearly 100 years, the Cirque Medrano was a cornerstone of Montmartre nightlife. Medrano's father took over the building at the corner of the rue des Martyrs in 1897. Medrano senior had been appearing at the circus, under its original name, Le Cirque Fernando, for nearly 10 years; he was painted by Toulouse-Lautrec, and the circus by Degas. Picasso was a frequent happy visitor, who in 1904 drew the clowns Brick and Grock.

After the death of Boum-Boum in 1913, his wife remarried and her new husband, Rodolphe Bonten, continued the circus tradition through the first world war. Although Jérôme Medrano had lived in infancy with his parents in a flat over the circus stables, when his mother had remarried he was sent to boarding school, from which he was encouraged to join the navy. He would have none of it, and at the age of 21 he returned and took over restoring the Cirque Medrano.

He reopened the building in 1929 and with his first wife,

Rachel Baquet, who also came from a circus family, he set about bringing to Paris some of the most modern acts from Europe and America. None was more sensational than the transvestite trapeze artist Barbettes. Although the other acrobats found Barbettes' abilities minimal, his appearance as a slim young blonde woman, at the end of her turn, took a bow, ripped off her wig and then flexed her muscles, showing that she was in fact a

Chevalier and Josephine Baker were photographed at a performance in 1927, christening one of the baby elephants with a bottle of champagne. At the beginning of the second world war, Medrano, who was by then divorced from his first wife, did join the navy. At the beginning of the occupation, the German forces took over the circus, but Medrano, returning to Paris in 1943, while working as an undercover agent for the

audience was in hysterics. This was my dead-pan boy, hero of a hundred movies. Frustration's Mime, persecuted by humans as well as objects.

The Cirque Medrano was always closely rivalled by the Cirque d'Éliver and in 1963, Medrano lost out to the owners of the other establishment, the Bouglonnes, who took over and renamed the building Le Nouveau Cirque de Montmartre. Its success was short-lived and the building was demolished in 1972. For the last 30 years of his life, Medrano lived in Monaco, where he continued to take a close interest in modern circus life. In 1996 he was inducted into the International Circus Hall of Fame in Peru, Indiana. The list of artists that he had presented was a roll-call of circus greats, and included Achille Zavatta, the clown who appeared in full costume and make-up, bearing a wreath on the day the demolition team arrived in 1972.

Jérôme Medrano published his memoirs in 1983, *Une Vie de Cirque*; he is survived by his wife, a son and daughter.

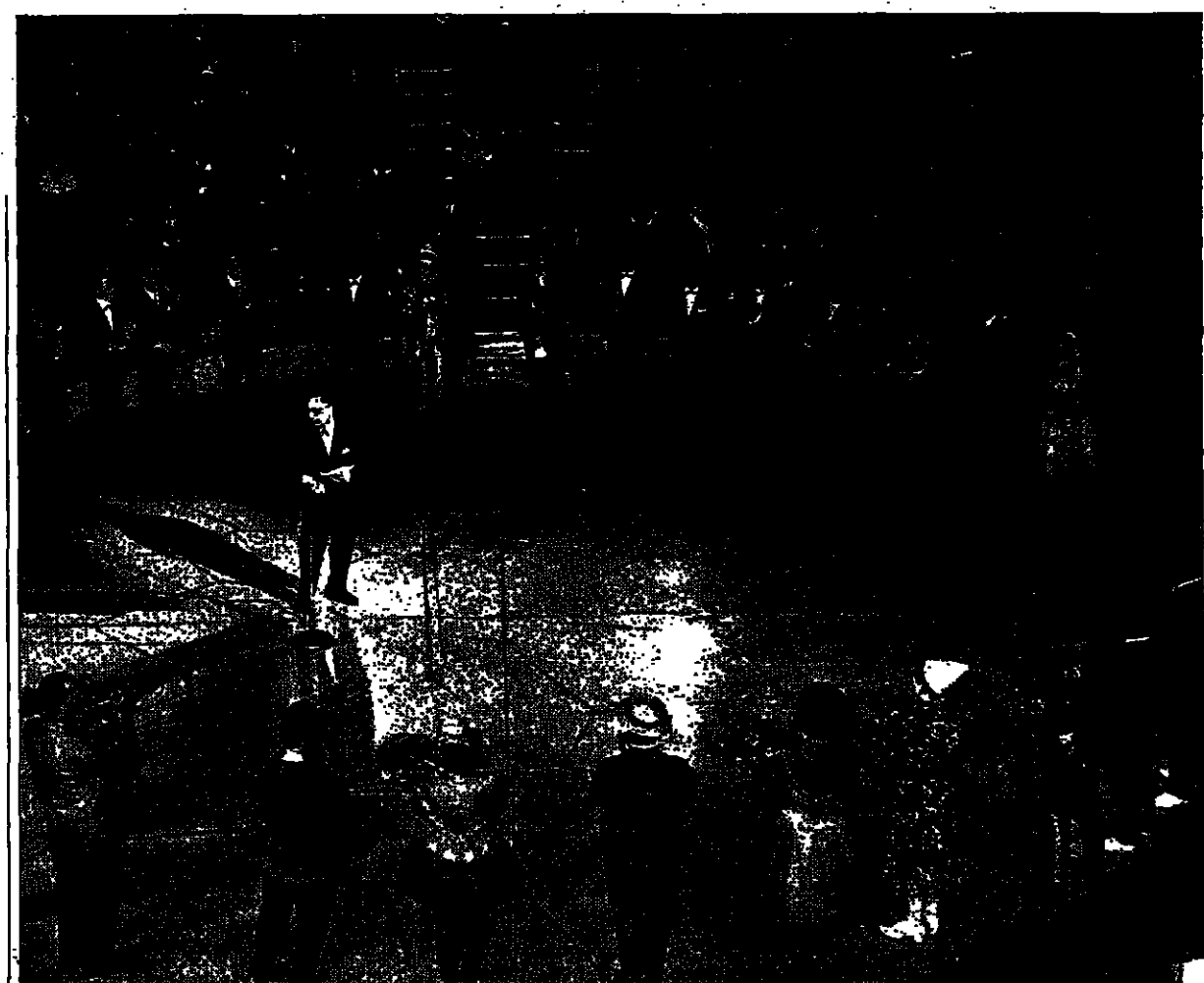
Patrick O'Connor

Jérôme Medrano, circus-owner, born May 18, 1907; died November 14, 1998

A clown appeared in full make-up, with a wreath, as the demolition team arrived

man, caused a stir. Jean Cocteau wrote: "Thanks to Barbettes, I now understand that it was not only for decency that the great nations and cultures had men play women's parts... his graceful motions and his puerile feats are... a clown's clown." When the clown Grock reappeared at the Cirque Medrano in 1937, he agreed to do so only if Jérôme would act as his sidekick. This was one of the few times that Boum-Boum's son appeared in the ring. During the 1930s, Medrano varied the bill at the circus by having ballet, big bands, and occasionally guest appearances by great singing stars. Maurice

Free French army, re-opened even presenting a pro-British act, "Les Chesterfolies". After the war, Medrano married his second wife, the acrobatic dancer Violette Schmidt. His greatest coup in the 1950s was to persuade Buster Keaton to appear at the circus. Just as Charlie Chaplin was always known in France as "Charlie", so Keaton had his own nickname "Malec". Paul Gallico covered his debut for an American paper and wrote: "He was carrying a mouldy-looking dress suit on a hanger, obviously looking for a cleaner. Before he had done, the suit was a wreck on the arena floor and



The ring cycle... Jérôme Medrano commands the troupe on the very last night of the famous Montmartre Circus which he took over from his father; Buster Keaton clowned there and Josephine Baker christened a baby elephant

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Analysis Restitution



The long game
versus Saddam
8

A hook for Holocaust justice

American lawyers and finance regulators are giving Jewish groups a powerful tool to crack open the vaults of banks, art collections and firms tainted by the Nazis, says
Alex Brummer

THE American Holocaust compensation lobby is powerful. Its prompting got the New York City bank regulator to hold up Deutsche Bank's \$10 billion takeover of Bankers Trust. The same interests which earlier this year forced the Swiss banks to set up a \$1.25-billion (\$250 million) compensation fund for victims of Nazi expropriation are using their new-found political clout to bring an end to other long-standing claims.

Some 54 years after the liberation of the concentration camps business and now the art world find themselves confronting a past long thought buried. As Steven Spielberg secures for the video archive the final witness of the Shoah generation, no Holocaust activists — led by the World Jewish Congress — seek final restoration of assets looted or left behind as European Jewry was forced overseas or into ghettos and the death camps.

But the challenge, now focusing on some of Europe's most powerful financial institutions, is not universally applauded. The initiatives are perceived — even in the Jewish communities — as haphazard (and in the case of banking) opportunistic. In the New York Times the former leader of the Crier (the main French Jewish group), Joseph Klein, suggested that the scramble for money was unseemly and an affront to the dignity of the Jewish people. He compared the lawyers involved to ambulance chasers. He challenged the moral basis on which much of this legal activity is being conducted — why in the United States rather than where the crimes took place. Despite the elevated ethical pose of the American authorities, who have lent grandees of politics and finance to the cause, Mr Klein noted that the United States did not have clean hands. President Franklin D. Roosevelt consistently refused to bomb the railroads to the camps when there was hard intelligence evidence of the destruction of European Jewry.

The picture is still not complete. The just-concluded Washington conference on Nazi seizures succeeded in broadening the frame from finance, banking and insurance to include the international art world and slave labour in manufacturing. In Britain the Trade Secretary, Peter Mandelson, has established a £25 million fund to begin compensation of Jewish refugees from Germany interned here during the second world war as aliens who had their assets seized. "Not a

glorious chapter in our history," Mr Mandelson said.

A full accounting of Jewish assets in Europe was commissioned by a committee of eminent persons headed by the former Federal Reserve Board chairman Paul Volcker but has yet to complete its work. For it, Helen Junz is preparing a doomsday book of pre-war Jewish assets and is deeply embroiled in complex valuation concepts. Potentially the exercise will produce the most authoritative auditing of pre-war Jewish assets to date and the figures could be startling. At the Washington conference, a Czech official told delegates that Jewish proprietors were thought to have more than 40 per cent of pre-war industrial assets. Returning that amount of wealth to the victims' heirs or to survivors' funds would be an enormous challenge.

The book for Holocaust claimants in the United States is the vulnerability of the financial sector to regulatory intervention. Over the decades it has been the pro-Israel lobby that has been the primary focus of Jewish political activism in the United States. But it has been the determination of the World Jewish Congress under the leadership of Edgar Bronfman (son of the Seagrams liquor and entertainment empire) to achieve justice for Holocaust survivors in their own lifetimes that has made the Shoah a new focus.

PRESSURE is exerted on politicians in states with high concentrations of Jewish activists who in turn influence public officials. It's no coincidence that New York City, where the Jewish vote is critical, has been so active in scrutinising bank mergers. Moreover, because New York's banking comptroller is the most powerful in the US — Wall Street is after all the world's most important banking centre — what New York does, other states follow. The Bankers Trust deal has been used as a lever to advance the class-action suit, brought by hundreds of individual survivors, against Deutsche Bank. Once Deutsche indicated its readiness to deal, the comptroller, Alan Hevesi, has seemed ready to lift the moratorium. Financial regulators are now making life increasingly difficult for the six major European insurance companies including Assicurazioni Generali, Allianz and Zurich.

At the Washington conference the Florida state insurance commissioner made it clear that his state was ready, if necessary, to use a sledgehammer to force the insurers to come to a settlement. The state pension funds could, for



The continental compensation trail

France

In 1995 Jacques Chirac formally recognised the responsibility of the French state for the crimes of the Vichy regime, beginning an ongoing process of review. In 1997 the archives of the Commissariat aux Oeuvres Juives were opened to public inspection for the first time. Suits are now before the courts for assets confiscated when French Jews were rounded up but not returned by the government restitution ministry after the liberation of France. Prime minister Lionel Jospin established a commission to study the despoliation of French Jews.

Hitler instructed the people's car (above) — now Volkswagen has set up a fund to help Jewish survivors. Maurice Papon (right) was sentenced this year to 10 years for his part in the war-time round-up and dispatch to the Nazi death camps of French Jews.

led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, a former labour minister and resistance fighter.

Switzerland

Despite a 1992 government edict on the return of Jewish

assets, Switzerland has been criticised for its slow pace of legal action. Swiss banks have been accused of hiding Jewish assets. Swiss banks have been accused of hiding Jewish assets. Swiss banks have been accused of hiding Jewish assets.

Germany

Since 1990 the German government has paid out more than \$20 billion in reparations to Jewish survivors. The German government has paid out more than \$20 billion in reparations to Jewish survivors.

Set up a \$200 million fund to help Jewish survivors. The German government has paid out more than \$20 billion in reparations to Jewish survivors.

instance, be required to be divested of all shareholding in the continental insurers. The gap between what the task force set up by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners believes is the correct compensation figure and what the companies have offered so far is wide. Generally, the large Italian insurer, has offered \$100 million; Deborah Senn of Washington state, the taskforce leader, believes \$1 billion would be more realistic. (This isn't the first time that financial regulators have used their muscle. The threatened withdrawal of pension funds from corporations with ties to South Africa eventually put enough financial pressure on the apartheid regime to usher in reform and democracy.)

THE latest area to be targeted is art. Several big pre-war collectors were Jewish but, as importantly, many thousands of middle-class families, particularly in Germany, had collected individual paintings which are now highly valued. The problem here is that since the war many of the looted artworks have been restored to national collections in museums on the basis of nationality or origin rather than provenance or ownership. What was broadly agreed in Washington by the 44 nations present was that action could at least be taken to catalogue, identify and publicise a list of the disputed art works.

"This is a major achievement which will reverberate through our museums, galleries, auction houses and in the hearts and homes of those families who may now have the chance to have returned what is rightfully theirs," said the American under secretary of state, Stuart Eizenstat, who is co-ordinating this effort. As with banking and insurance, the conference appears to have found a lever to force the auction houses to co-operate. Until the ownership of disputed works in public and private collections is resolved, the market will be overshadowed, driving down prices and commissions. Injunctions could be slapped on auctions of art at which there are items of disputed provenance.

It's unfortunate, in some respects, that survivors' claims are increasingly seen in reparatory terms, appearing to confirm ancient anti-semitic stereotypes. The truth is that the running is now being made by American authorities determined to correct one of the greatest injustices of this century. If along the way there is some stereotyping then so be it. The survivors and their heirs were non-people for too long.

Sources: (1) New York Times, December 15, 1998; (2) Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret*, Little Brown 1980; (3) Peter Mandelson speech to British-Israel Chamber of Commerce, December 7, 1998; (4) Jewish Chronicle, December 11 1998 www.johrn.co.uk; (5) Le Nouvel Observateur, Spoliation des biens juifs, ce qui s'est passé en France, December 3-9, 1998; (6) Die Zeit, Ende eines Tabus, December 10, 1998. Researcher Matthew Keating, Curtis Brown. Alex Brummer is the Guardian's financial editor. His family lost land and property in post-war Europe. No claims have been lodged.

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Belgium	BFr	4,370	7,640	14,060
Netherlands	Fl	265	465	855
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FinanceGuardian

The problem: rising unemployment. The cure: boosting competitiveness

Winter jobs nightmare

Mark Atkinson
Economics Correspondent

THE Government's nightmare of a winter of rising unemployment appears to be coming true. Official figures yesterday showed the six-year downward trend in joblessness reversing.

Although employment is at a record high of 27,200,000, partly due to an inflow of previously inactive people, both measures of unemployment rose for the second month, suggesting the jobs market has reached a turning point.

The claimant count — the number out of work and claiming benefit — increased by 5,900 to 1,339,200 in November, while the Labour Force Survey, which includes everyone looking for work in the previous four weeks, jumped by 16,000 between August and October to 1,892,000.

The Office for National Statistics, which publishes the figures, said the increase in the Labour Force Survey was "not statistically significant" but indicated that the more up-to-date claimant count, up by an average of 4,000 in the last three months, was a

warning sign. "The fall in the claimant count appears to have levelled off," said an ONS spokeswoman.

With manufacturing sliding deeper into recession and the slowdown in the services sector gathering pace, Michael Dicks, economist at City firm Lehman Brothers, said it was only a matter of time before things got "really nasty".

Damian Green, the Conservative spokesman on employment, said: "This is the worst possible news as we enter 1999. The Government's economic mismanagement means that thousands of families are facing a bleak Christmas and new year."

The one bright spot for the Government came in separate data showing public finances on track for an unexpectedly large surplus in the current financial year, giving the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, plenty of scope to let borrowing rise without blowing a hole in his health and education plans — provided the economy avoids a serious recession.

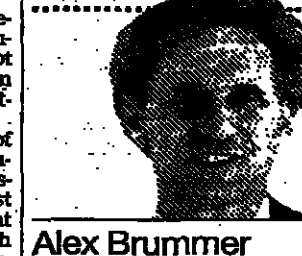
Defying City expectations of a public sector net cash requirement of around £2 billion in November, the actual figure was just £1 billion, leaving the public finances in surplus by £4.3 billion in the year to date.

Even though economic slowdown will inevitably see revenues soften from here, the Chancellor appears to have built in a considerable 'comfort factor' in his budgetary arithmetic, said Kevin Darlington at the Dutch bank, ABN-Amro.

A breakdown of the unemployment figures showed the shake-out from manufacturing payrolls is accelerating, with 53,000 disappearing since February more than a quarter in October alone.

Notebook

Oh, for the policies without the gloss



Alex Brummer

PETER Mandelson's paper on Britain's competitive future is long on ideas, but short on analysis and cash. The biggest lump of cash, the £1 billion science fund, was unveiled by his predecessor, Margaret Beckett, at the time of the comprehensive spending review. Even Labour spin cannot make that seem new.

There are also intellectual gaps in Mandelson's approach. Clearly he felt the need to draw distinctions between his own approach and that of his Tory predecessors. But not all that the Conservatives did in this area was irrelevant: the monitoring of clusters of excellence like aerospace and pharmaceuticals begun by Michael Heseltine during his time at the DTI, for example.

Jobs famine

THE daily toll of announced job losses, from industry to Rover and Citigroup in the financial community, can give a misleading impression of what is happening in the economy since, for every job lost, there are usually a few hundred call centre posts being added.

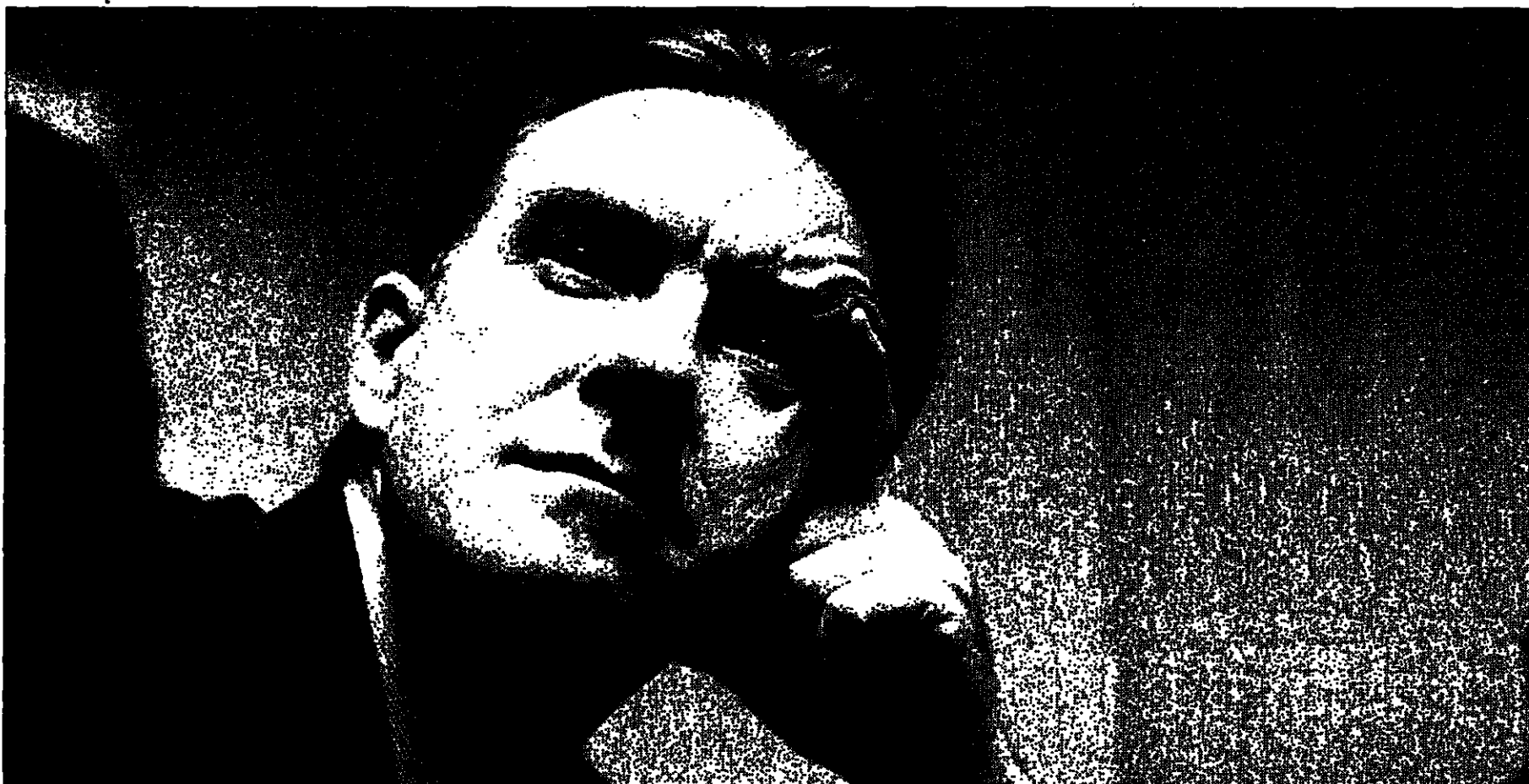
The latest unemployment data suggest that a trend can now be determined. On the old-style claimant count the jobless numbers rose for the second month in a row, this time by 5,900. On the more broadly based survey measures some 16,000 jobs were lost between August and October.

The scale of the losses suggests that the economy is now well off the boil and the pace of rises could well increase in the coming months, despite the puzzle over a growing level of vacancies. This can only encourage the confidence of the Bank in easing rates in 1999.

Lost spark

ONE usually has to wait until the new year for the first official glimpse of Marks & Spencer sales performance. This time around the figures appear to be so disappointing that market participants are getting some early clues. Some estimates suggest that sales in the current financial period could be 6-10 per cent down on a year ago. This would represent a substantial deterioration of the performance at the half-way stage which triggered the revolt by Keith Oates and the eventual resolution of the succession problems.

It was not meant to be like this. M&S management has been working overtime this year to bring in new capacity in the shape of the former Littlewoods stores, in time for the holiday rush. But Christmas has been marked by a spending famine and M&S has taken as big a hit as anyone. Moreover, there is not much use looking to overseas for salvation at time when other industrial economies are slowing and the Far East has yet to pull out of its nosedive. If there is a surprise it is that the share were not hit harder in Wednesday trading. Then again, they are already over 40 per cent off their peak.



Wake-up call... Peter Mandelson's strategy relies on the hi-tech business 'clusters' he found on a visit last month to Cambridge's Silicon Fen

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

Mandelson moves to reverse the century of decline

The future means keeping ahead of the curve. Mark Atkinson and David Gow report

PETER Mandelson, the Trade and Industry Secretary, yesterday unveiled a new enterprise fund to provide venture capital for the hi-tech small businesses of the future that should secure Britain's long-term competitiveness.

The fund, worth £150 million over three years, is one of 75 initiatives set out by Mr Mandelson in Labour's first competitiveness white paper since it took office 18 months ago.

Billing it as a "wake up call" to the nation to reverse more than a century of relative decline, Mr Mandelson said the Government aimed to create the conditions for "an economic step change".

He warned that unless British firms stayed "ahead of the curve" they would be rapidly left behind in the increasingly competitive global economy and the enterprise fund

heads a series of new and previously announced measures to close Britain's competitiveness gap. It replaces and amplifies the small firms loan guarantee scheme by channelling venture capital to businesses with growth potential.

Ministers and officials are discussing with six banks — Lloyds, NatWest, Bank of Scotland, Royal Bank of Scotland, the European Investment Bank and European Investment Fund — ways of providing long-term equity for start-up firms at the cutting edge of technology.

Officials said it differed from existing schemes by offering both equity and loans over a longer period than the current maximum of 10 years. The aim is also to encourage regional venture capital funds.

Chris Humphries, director-general of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "The new Enterprise Fund has great potential to help create tomorrow's success stories. The US equivalent, the Small Business Investment Companies, has invested in such winners as Federal Express, Sun Microsystems, Intel and Apple."

Blueprint for a can-do culture built on ideas

Economics/Vision is radical but expensive, writes Mark Atkinson

IN A global economy where capital is mobile, technology easily transferable and standard products can be made more cheaply in developing countries, the Trade and Industry Secretary, Peter Mandelson, believes developed countries such as Britain have to take the high road to raise living standards.

That means concentrating on innovative products and processes which competitors find hard to imitate. "The UK's distinctive capabilities are not raw materials, land or cheap labour. They must be our knowledge, skills and creativity," says the white paper.

To that end, he has come up with a number of proposals — some new, others refashioned — designed to strengthen the UK's capabilities by, for example, fostering ties between universities and business.

Mr Mandelson is envious of the way universities such as Stanford in California, whose alumni have created business worth \$1 trillion, commer-

cialise research. He hopes to replicate their success here. Like the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, he also wants to transfer across the Atlantic a much more vigorous spirit of entrepreneurship not stifled by fear of failure and loathing of success.

Hence the pledge to review insolvency laws to give businesses in difficulties a better chance of turning themselves round and the promise to look at ways of removing the stigma associated with business failure.

All of this is laudable, but it is unclear Mr Mandelson has grasped the enormity of reversing a century of economic decline. Changing the business culture will take years of effort and cost a great deal.

While the Government has promised to invest an extra £1.4 billion in science over the

- ### The main points
- CASH FOR ENTERPRISE**
 - A new £150 million enterprise fund to help small firms with growth capital. From venture capital to be provided from the leading financial institutions
 - PERFORMANCE TRACKER**
 - New competitiveness index, to be published annually, to track the performance of UK businesses versus their foreign counterparts
 - START-UP ADVANCE**
 - A target of providing advice, through Business Link, to at least 10,000 business start-ups a year
 - CASH FOR INNOVATION**
 - Increases in the Department of Trade and Industry's innovation budget by more than 20 per cent to £250 million
 - CASH FOR SCIENCE**
 - The launch of a £25 million Science Enterprise Challenge, creating up to eight enterprise centres in universities
 - IMPROVING SUPPLY**
 - Fund up to 10 proposals from sectors to improve supply chains
 - HELP FOR FINANCING**
 - Regional selective assistance to be targeted at more high-quality, knowledge-based projects
 - SCIENCE CLUSTERS**
 - Public-private venture led by Lord Sainsbury to promote clustering of biotechnology firms, one of Britain's strengths
 - GRADUATE SCHEME**
 - An additional £10 million to encourage graduates to work on projects with small firms

Minister moves beyond the spin

Politics/David Gow and Mark Atkinson on a coming of age at the DTI

PETER Mandelson's white paper on competitive business represents a coming of age for the Trade and Industry Secretary as a serious politician, again mapping out new territory for Labour.

The last six months have been good for Mr Mandelson, who has won plaudits from business for his navigation of the DTI, notably for dropping the baggage of state interventionism and distaste for business that had been retained under Margaret Beckett, his predecessor.

He's definitively emerged from the darkness where he operated as a spin-doctor and Cabinet fixer, and has been impressive at the DTI, said one executive who expects Mr Mandelson to use his term as a prelude to achieving his ambition to become Foreign Secretary.

But the white paper is also meant as a coming of age for the DTI which, even under Michael Heseltine, had been unable to escape relegation to

the also-rans of Whitehall. Even so, Mr Mandelson's aim has been to challenge the Treasury as leading department in the areas of competition and productivity, and to stake the DTI claim to be a big economic department of state.

With the backing of the Prime Minister, Mr Mandelson sees himself as challenging the drive by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, to establish the Treasury's hegemony over Whitehall.

Rather than fall into the trap of his predecessor in pushing policies that were not only anathema to the Treasury but disowned by Downing Street, Mr Mandelson is promoting ideas that enjoy the full backing of Tony Blair.

Thus the Prime Minister writes in the white paper foreword: "Old-fashioned state intervention did not and cannot work. But neither does naive reliance on markets."

Similarly, yesterday, Mr Mandelson said Labour had been wrong in virtually every instance to oppose the privatisations carried out by the Tories in the 1980s and 1990s.

But even though some see not a lot of difference between his white paper and that of Mr Heseltine, Mr Mandelson sees the critical function as promoting competition in privatised markets — although not in the field of mail delivery.

News in brief

Treasury sets value targets

Treasury Secretary Stephen Evers today announces a revolution in how the Government manages its money when he unveils the first set of public service agreements between the Treasury and individual departments.

Whitehall has signed up to more than 500 targets, ranging from reducing rough sleeping by two-thirds within four years to a 30 per cent cut in vehicle crime by 2003. Progress will be monitored by the Treasury and a Cabinet committee chaired by Mr Evers.

Mighty mouse

A Southern California computer company has accused software producer Microsoft of stealing its design for an ergonomic mouse and has asked for unspecified damages because of "the wilful nature of Microsoft's infringement". In a lawsuit filed in Marshall, Texas, Goldtouch Technologies alleges that Microsoft's IntelliMouse Pro is a copy of the Goldtouch, which was made after officials from

both companies had discussed the design.

Housing hiatus

House prices rises will slow to 3 per cent in 1999, fractionally above the likely inflation rate for the next 12 months — according to a forecast from the Nationwide Building Society Britain's third-biggest home-loan operation blames delays in cutting interest rates for low confidence among potential purchasers.

York's trump card

A new operations centre for CFP card protection will bring 750 jobs to York in the next five years, ending a lean period for the city since train-bulldoz ABB closed its carriage works there three years ago. CFP, which insures many of the 800 credit cards stolen in the UK daily, is to build the base on part of the former ABB site where railway stock had been made for 150 years. The announcement yesterday followed a covert testing exercise last summer, when advertisements placed by an unnamed financial company asked for specimen CVs from local people.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.53	Germany 2.7077	Malaysia 6.42	Singapore 2.78
Austria 18.99	Greece 454.57	Malta 0.61	South Africa 9.83
Belgium 55.86	Hong Kong 12.72	Netherlands 3.0420	Spain 228.32
Canada 2.2286	India 7.14	New Zealand 3.14	Sweden 13.16
Cyprus 0.60	Ireland 1.0844	Portugal 275.39	Switzerland 2.18
Denmark 6.56	Israel 7.018	Spain 275.39	Turkey 487.640
France 6.0980	Italy 2.065	Saudi Arabia 0.22	USA 1.6425

Sourced by Reuters (forecasting report, quoted and rounded)

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Cricket

Fraser and Atherton left out of one-dayers

Mike Selvey in Canberra

MIKE Atherton and Angus Fraser, the belt and braces of the England team for so long, have been omitted from the squad who will contest the triangular one-day series that follows on from the Ashes in the new year.

But the 16-strong party contains two new players in Mark Alleyne of Gloucestershire and Leicestershire's Vince Wells, both all-rounders in the bits-and-pieces mode. Nasser Hussain, not even included in a large preliminary squad announced last month, also gains a place, probably because of the unavailability of Graham Thorpe, who returned to England last week because of his back problem.

John Crawley, who has cut a sorry figure in the Tests, gets a surprise place on the strength of his capacity to keep wicket in an emergency.

In announcing the squad yesterday the tour manager Graham Gooch, one of the

ciplined bowling had to be off-set by his cumbersome fielding and batting.

However each played one-day international last summer and with the World Cup scheduled for May and June, when pitches are at their most skittish and big-hitting starts can be negated by a dominance of seam, both were considered strong candidates for inclusion.

Things are moving on, however. Atherton has had, by his standards, a poor Test series and is increasingly troubled by his degenerative back condition. His omission may be viewed as a chance to recuperate and not suffer the rigours of a hectic schedule with its interminable flights, but it could also be seen as a signal that the selectors do not trust his back to last the course.

As for Fraser, who came here as the second leading wicket-taker in the Tests, this year but has not made the side since the first Test, he may have been earmarked, too, but it seems unlikely.

For Wells and Alleyne opportunity is knocking at the right time. England one-day sides of the past year have been characterised by the proliferation of all-rounders, lending depth to the batting and options to the bowling.

On the slow pitches of Sharjah a year ago Doug Brown and Matthew Fleming enjoyed success only to come unstuck in the Caribbean.

Wells and Alleyne both have batting as the stronger suit, and the back-up of bowling that is medium pace in the case of Alleyne and not much quicker in Wells's.

"Both are quality all-round cricketers we are keen to look at, and both give us options," Alleyne said. "Vince can either open the innings or bat in the middle order as well as bowl medium-pace. His form has been a vital factor in Leicestershire's success."

"Mark is an effective player in the middle order, bowls medium pace and his wicket-keeping experience gives us another option to look at along with John Crawley."

Graham Gooch, reflecting on England's failure to regain the Ashes for the fifth time, said: "Until we get a hard, competitive, tough domestic system which breeds your young talent, and conditions that force them to be better than they are, we're not going to be consistently successful."

"We're obviously going to play well on occasions and maybe in some series, but you don't suddenly get hard-nosed cricketers when they get to international level."

"They've got to be honed and brought up and nurtured and taught the right disciplines, and that's the hard part. However, he added, that a coaching and support systems in place at the top level are much better than when he broke into Test cricket.

"When I started in 1975, you just turned up with the team, went through the motions in a net on the Wednesday afternoon and played the next day. Now all the things that the other sides do, like the Australians and the South Africans, we do as well, and sometimes we lead in those areas so it's not for want of that."

three England selectors, said that exclusion from the party — which will play a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 13 matches against Australia and Sri Lanka beginning in Brisbane on January 10 — does not mean that chances of selection for the World Cup are diminished.

But while the series may in part be used to eliminate candidates, the chairman David Graveney has always taken the view that the Australia party ought to be getting close to that for the World Cup, which has to be played by the end of March. "Coming up with a final 16 names was an extremely difficult job, but we are delighted with this combination," he said. "These players are likely to form the nucleus of our parties for Sharjah tournament in April and the World Cup."

"But we do recognise that the tournaments following this are likely to present different, tougher challenges and we are expecting to find in Australia. Just because a player is not chosen, it doesn't mean he has a line drawn through his name for Sharjah or the World Cup."

Both Atherton and Fraser have had mixed experiences in recent limited-over competitions. Atherton, while still Test captain, had been replaced for the one-day games by Adam Hogg because there was no guarantee that he would make the side in all conditions. Fraser's dis-

Ponting the 'punter' goes by the book

EAGER to restore its battered image in the wake of the hushing-up of the Mark Waugh-Shane Warne affair, the Australian Cricket Board yesterday revealed with comparative alacrity — and no little pride — that the Test batsman Ricky Ponting had rejected an approach by a bookmaker to sell sensitive information.

Mal Speed, the ACB chief executive, announced that Ponting was offered money by an Australian bookmaker at a greyhound meeting in Sydney last year to provide information about the make-up of the Australian team, the identity of the 12th man, the condition of the pitch and similar information. "Ricky assures me he rejected the approach out of hand and immediately reported it to his manager," said Speed.

Ponting informed the ACB just over a week ago, shortly after the Australian media broke the news of the Waugh-Warne cover-up. Several players, including England's Doug Brown and Adam Hogg, Australia's Greg Matthews and New Zealand's Danny Morrison,



Ponting... rejected advance

subsequently admitted to having received similar approaches to Ponting's.

Nicknamed "Punter" in reference to his love of a flutter, Ponting has requested that he be the first player to appear at the hastily-organised Australian inquiry into betting and match-fixing, due to start next week and run for about two months. Rob O'Regan, QC has been placed in charge and given wide-ranging powers.

The ACB, meanwhile, is awaiting approval for the Waugh-Warne cover-up video testimony to a Pakistani inquiry into match-fixing rather than appear in person. Justice Gajum, said Speed, is understood to be "amenable".



Soldier of misfortune... a member of England's Barony Army finds something to celebrate despite defeat and national humiliation in Adelaide

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM CHADWICK

The Army that marches on its bladder

Simon Briggs discovers that, win or lose, canned laughter and a bottled-up lager mentality keeps England's itinerants happy

THREE Tests into the series, this England team have yet to show much heart for the fight. But you could hardly say the same of their travelling supporters. For the best part of an hour after Glenn McGrath & Co had finished England off on Tuesday, the fools on the hill kept chanting away defiantly: "Barony Army — Alec Stewart... Barony Army — Alec Stewart". The Ashes may be staying south once again, they seem to

say, but the fans aren't finished just yet. In fact the game was just the warm-up event. The Biggest Barony Bash kicked off at the Old Adelaide Geol. Around 1,500 people, two-thirds of them English, each paid a \$45 (about £2) entry fee in aid of leukemia research. The takings will be presented to Ian Botham next summer, as he begins his next fundraising walk for the charity.

Dave Peacock, the Barony Army's co-founder and

party co-ordinator, is predictably nicknamed "The General". In England he is a recruitment consultant; here, he is the spokesman for a raggedy-arsed collection of cricket fanatics, backpackers and professional drinkers, few of whom seemed unduly bothered by the team's latest setback. "So what, we lost," he announced. "There's more to it than the cricket. All these people are on holiday; they want to have a good time."

Garth Evans, another of the Army's three co-founders, was not quite as relaxed about England's plight. "I got very depressed; more than most of them, I think. I couldn't have stayed there for the singing at the end."

A surveyor with Sainsbury's, Evans is not able to get away from his job every winter and it is now four years since he has seen England win away from home.

"Listen to that," he said and nodded in the direction of the marquee, where a pack of identically T-shirted men was yelling along raucously to a Blues

Brothers number. "Now imagine if we'd won. I was here when we won in Adelaide last time round, and it was the best night ever."

Repeated overseas humiliations have failed to prevent the Barony Army from expanding every year since its inception back in 1994-95. Among the infantrymen patrolling the cells and corridors of the Adelaide Geol was Jack Hyams, a new recruit at the age of 79.

Hyams can justly claim to be the leading amateur runner in English history, with a career total of 120,000 runs, 170 centuries for various north-London

clubs, including at least one century in seven consecutive decades of his life. This was the first time he had gone on tour solely as a spectator.

Energetic leafletting and a radio slot by Peacock produced a decent showing even from the locals, something that may now elude England's cricketers in the dead Tests at Melbourne and Sydney.

But contempt in Australia for the tourists does not seem to extend to their fans. "They can hold their drink, those Barony blokes," my taxi driver mused. "I reckon they're all right."

Athletics

Mitchell is cleared of using drugs

Duncan Mackay

DENNIS MITCHELL, the Olympic gold medalist, did not commit a doping violation, a three-member American panel has unanimously agreed. But the decision could once again put the United States governing body on a collision course with the International Amateur Athletic Federation, which originally imposed a two-year suspension on Mitchell.

The USA Track & Field doping hearing board's decision, announced yesterday after a two-day hearing last weekend in Chicago, clears Mitchell for competition inside and outside the States.

Mitchell was suspended by the IAAF in July after it concluded his urine sample from an out-of-competition test in April had excessive levels of testosterone. It has already refused to accept an earlier decision by the US committee to lift a two-year suspension on the former world champion Mary Stoney and last month decided to refer her case to its arbitration panel.

"Mitchell can run wherever he wants until the IAAF Doping Commission decides on the case," said Giorgio Reinieri, the spokesman for the IAAF. "We must wait until we see all the paperwork before making any further announcement."

Mitchell had always maintained his innocence. "It's been a long uphill battle," he said. "It's taken a lot of energy from me and everybody around me. Going through the process, you never know what's going to happen, but I had faith all along that I was going to be exonerated."

A member of the gold-medal winning 4x100 metres team and bronze medalist behind Britain's Linford Christie in the 100 m at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, Mitchell has been the chairman of the Athletics Advisory Committee of USA Track & Field for the last two years.

"Even going to practise is different now," he said. "The stress is off, I'm working toward next season and I'm working now with a big ray of hope."

"I thought the Goodwill Games last July would be my last meet. Now I can continue to do what I plan to do, that is, compete until 2001."

Rugby Union

Twickenham in the dock

Robert Armstrong finds the battle lines drawn in Dublin today for a trial of strength over the future direction of the professional game

THE stage is set in Dublin today for another acrimonious stand-off in rugby's corridors of power when Rugby Football Union officials appear before an international board tribunal.

The RFU is to be judged at a unique trial by five IB delegates following an application to the European Commission by English First Division Rugby challenging the legality of existing international and national rules relating to the top clubs, who in the professional era are now business enterprises.

The IB is particularly incensed that Twickenham chose to ignore a specific Board directive. The IB asked to see Twickenham's submission, but instead it was despatched directly to Brussels.

The IB chairman Vernon Pugh QC has the option of suspending England from the board, although he said yesterday: "I don't think England will be expelled." But if even a fine is imposed, Twickenham, on the advice of leading counsel, will almost certainly refuse to pay.

Twickenham believes there is no case to answer and therefore there is no basis for a fine — £50,000 has been mentioned — or indeed any other form of sanction. If Twickenham loses the argument they could also be asked to pay all the costs, including business-class flights for the delegates from Vancouver, Johannesburg, Auckland and Tokyo — as well as a short trip from Northern Ireland. But that will be relatively insignificant compared with the bills submitted by the lawyers.

The IB maintains that the RFU, whose delegation will be led by its new chief executive Francis Baron, must be brought to heel because of its failure to stop the clubs making their submission to the European Commission.

The Board is also upset that Twickenham has apparently accepted Anglo-Welsh fixtures involving the rebel Welsh clubs, Cardiff and Swansea, who have both turned their backs on the Welsh Rugby Union. The RFU will be joined in the Dublin dock by Wales tomorrow on this issue.

English First Division Rugby, the umbrella company for the top clubs, had decided to establish whether regulations framed years ago within the context of amateur rugby still hold good in a professional game that enjoys commercial freedom sanctioned by EU law. The word from Brussels is that the IB, not the English clubs or the RFU, is out of step with the law on restraint of trade in several respects.

In particular the Board's regulation 8, which compels clubs to release players automatically for international duty whenever their domestic commitments may have to be rewritten to take account of the club's primary of contract over players and their right to payment from the Union in lieu of a player's services.

After protracted negotiations, Twickenham has come to acknowledge that partnership with its clubs is the only viable way forward, offering a route that allows Twickenham to retain its traditional control of international rugby.

In effect, the clubs are a series of small businesses operating in Europe's free market which, in law, safeguards the movement of players and the ability of the clubs to develop competitions by making their own sponsorship and television deals.

For their part, the IB appear not to have come to terms with the commercial realities of professional rugby at club level, choosing instead to regard the submission to the European Commission as a threat which will hasten its drift to the margins of rugby power.

The IB will apparently make no public statement and deliver no verdict today. Instead, its representatives — Tim Gresson (New Zealand), Rian Oberholzer (South Africa), Shigeyuki Kono (Japan), Alan Sharp (Canada) and Syd Mill (Ireland) — will discuss their response privately and communicate their decision to Twickenham within seven days, Christmas Eve.

However, Baron has determined that the RFU will not merely react to events but instead attempt to shape them so that England's ruling body is not constantly forced into a defensive posture.

It is likely that he will issue an immediate statement setting out Twickenham's policy on dealing with its clubs whatever transpires at the Dublin tribunal.

The Northampton lock Jon Phillips and the London Scottish forward Mick Watson have been found not guilty of pushing match officials by a Rugby Football Union disciplinary panel. Phillips was cleared of shoving the referee during his club's match against Moseley last month. Watson had been accused of pushing the fourth official at Gloucester in October.

Ice Hockey

Steelers battle for survival

We Batchelder

SHEFFIELD Steelers are desperately hoping for a bumper crowd for tonight's home Superleague match against Nottingham to ease their cash-flow problems.

However they face competition in the form of Sky television which is broadcasting the game live. The Steelers manager David Simms yesterday stressed the club was not in receivership, but admitted the financial situation was "very serious".

He said that discussions were being held with a possible new owner, but any deal would not happen until early January at best.

The players were paid up to date on Tuesday, four days

late. The club's fans have already contributed more than £100,000 in membership of a "100 Club" investment scheme but its rules prevent any of that money being used to cover the ice hockey club's running costs until the total invested reaches £135,000.

Simms added that there has been a "very heartening" response from supporters of other Superleague sides.

Yesterday 12 Manchester Storm fans arrived at the Steelers' office having taken the day off work "to come over and do whatever we can to help".

After Saturday's match at Newcastle, Sheffield's next home game is the Boxing Day visit of Manchester, a fixture that virtually assures a capacity 8,500 crowd. If Steelers can survive that long.

Motor Racing

Appeal eases path for Ecclestone

Alan Henry

BERNIE ECCLESTONE's attempt to raise £1.3 billion through an issue of Eurobonds has moved a step closer with the dismissal of a court case challenging his monopoly of grand prix television rights.

Wolfgang Eisele, a German television producer, had claimed that Ecclestone's centralised marketing of the sport was an infringement of European Union law, but the Frankfurt Court of Appeal rejected Eisele's case.

The decision will have eased the concerns of potential investors who seemed hesitant to commit themselves to a sport at the centre of such potential controversy.

Ecclestone's Formula One empire had been tipped for a full Stock Exchange flotation in 1997 but a succession of contractual problems with the competing teams prevented it going ahead. The Eurobond issue was seen as a halfway house which would raise sufficient cash to pay off the bank's debt and allow Ecclestone to expand his digital television technology, possibly into football or tennis.

An unnamed German bank has apparently indicated its interest in purchasing all of the Formula One Eurobonds, providing that the launch is scaled down to £1 billion.

However, Ecclestone may face another hurdle before he can get the green light. The EU competition commissioner Karel van Miert is considering whether Ecclestone's television contract arrangements are anti-competitive and will probably not reach a decision before February.

The grand prix teams also have an interest in Ecclestone's new deal receiving a trouble-free ride. Under the terms of the Concorde agreement these 11 owners (12 from the start of 2000 when Honda's new works team make their debut) stand to share 47 per cent of the £1 television revenue which is set to rise to around £265 million by 2001.

The better the teams perform, the more they will earn. To this end the uncompetitive Prost-Francis team has confirmed that the top British designer John Barnard has been appointed an exclusive technical consultant to develop its 1999 grand prix challenger.

JPM 10.15.20

SportsGuardian

Premiership: Manchester United 1 Chelsea 1

Zola finds drawing power

David Lacey
at Old Trafford
sees more fury
than finesse

ANDY COLE's goal-scoring instincts ended a dreary and ill-humoured stalemate last night as Manchester United sought the victory over Chelsea which would restore them to the top of the Premiership. A neat one-two with Gustavo Poyet saw Gianfranco Zola deny them nine minutes from time with an exquisite chip.

Beaten once in their last nine League visits to Old Trafford, Chelsea had travelled north-west in bullish mood, albeit without the suspended Frank Leboeuf. Their defence was also missing Marcel Desailly, who had a knee injury, which did not enhance their chances of coping with Dwight Yorke and Cole.

Yet in keeping with Ryan Giggs and David Beckham on the bench Alex Ferguson seemed prepared to sacrifice something of the usual width and pace of United's attack in order to cramp Chelsea's passing game. Nevertheless, Jesper Blomqvist was still an obvious threat on the left wing.

For United, following Saturday's loss of a 2-0 lead in the 2-2 draw at Tottenham, this was a chance to show that doubts about their defensive resilience were nothing more than idle gossip. Although Gianluca Vialli, sharing the perch for unexpected team selections, had decided to leave Poyet among the substitutes Chelsea still had the quality to pull Ferguson's team apart at the back.

With Dennis Wise, making a brief appearance between suspensions, linking defence to attack and Zola scuttling among United's defenders this potential was apparent. Yet United should have gone ahead after six minutes when Blomqvist turned Chelsea's defence for the first time.

Blomqvist's precise cross from the byline was nodded back by Yorke and the ball arrived at the feet of Cole, who was standing practically eye-ball-to-eye-ball with Ed de Goey. Perhaps Cole needed a modicum of range for a proper shot. At all events the ball hit him and bounced away.

The match was always going to offer a distinct contrast between United's broad-brush approach and Chelsea's more studious etchings. And the way the tackles began flying in soon recalled recent test encounters between these teams. Small wonder, perhaps, that Ferguson played his minders across midfield.

A series of fouls made it harder for the match to achieve the rhythm and flow the occasion demanded. As a result the front runners on both sides began to pine for proper service, without which Cole and Yorke, who had been caught late by Cole and later gave way to Poyet, coincided with a clear chance for



Fly boys... United's Roy Keane and Gianfranco Zola of Chelsea in aerial combat at Old Trafford last night

PHOTOGRAPH: BEN RADFORD

ting few chances to take on Jaap Stam and Gary Neville. Chelsea did not achieve a realistic scoring attempt until the 25th minute when Wise, arriving late, headed wide from Graeme Le Saux's cross.

On the half-hour a caution for Wise, who had tripped Paul Scholes as he threatened to break clear, was followed by the tedious hiatus over the free-kick, during which Dan Petrescu was shown the yellow card for trying to move the ball back. Nothing came of the kick, which rather summed up the uneventful nature of the game at that point.

Oddly enough, the brief absence of Le Saux, who had been caught late by Cole and later gave way to Poyet, coincided with a clear chance for

Chelsea. The angle and weight of Wise's pass combined with the timing and angle of Zola's run to expose United's right flank. Schmeichel blocked Zola's shot but at least Chelsea's attack had shown its teeth.

Yet United it was who provided the first significant bite in stoppage time when a marvellous reaction by Cole gave them the lead. Schmeichel set up Blomqvist for another centre from the left which found Nicky Butt attempting a shot with Cole leaping in an effort to get out of the way. Butt's shot still hit Cole but from the unlikelyst of positions the striker managed to land, turn and beat De Goey with a low drive inside the left-hand post. The match

needed a goal, and had Yorke not misfired his shot after Cole had exploited an error by De Goey it would surely have been another.

Yet the general tightness of the match refused to go away. Vialli had wagged a disapproving finger at Graham Barber at half-time following five Chelsea bookings and none for United until Wes Brown was cautioned for a foul on Poyet soon after. Television suggested Petrescu had responded to his yellow card by spitting. It was that sort of night.

Manchester United (4-4-2): Schmeichel; Brown, Stam, G. Neville, Irwin; Butt, Keane, Scholes, Blomqvist (59); Yorke (80), Cole. Chelsea (4-4-2): De Goey; Ferrer, Duberry, Lambourde, Le Saux; Poyet, Petrescu, Di Matteo, Wise, Sabayero; Zola, Flo.

Referee G. Barber (Plymouth).

McClair's move to Blackburn delayed by compensation row

Brian McClair's move to Blackburn has been delayed by a compensation row between Motherwell and Blackburn Rovers.

The former Manchester United player has agreed to join Rovers as Brian Kidd's assistant, but Motherwell are demanding compensation for the loss of McClair who joined them last summer on a free transfer.

Blackburn are refusing to meet the demands of the Scottish Premier League club on the grounds that McClair would be coming to Ewood Park only as a

member of the backroom staff and would not be registered as a player.

Last night players and fans at Fir Park paid silent tribute to Andy Thomson, the 19-year-old Motherwell striker whose sudden death 10 days ago caused the postponement of the club's Premier League game against Dundee. Motherwell won the rearranged match 2-1 with Stephen McMillan scoring a 77th-minute winner. Well were reduced to 10 men for the last eight minutes when Sham Steele was sent off for violent conduct.

Cricket has the last word when the game is over



Frank Keating

In spite of its present travails, it must say something about the innate affection cricket holds over the general sporting psyche that, with a sigh at the year's imminent end, I fancy a majority of you will recognise instantly the occupation of the following roll-call.

Doug Wright, Henry Horton, Dick Spooner, Alan Revell, Jock Livingston, Arthur Phibbey, Billy Sutcliffe, Ellis Robinson, Ian Johnson, Jackie McGlew, Athol Rowan, Lester King and Chulian Ahmed.

They were first-class cricketers, and they took off their pads and declared their final innings closed in 1898. Each of them were awarded fulsome obits in the public prints, testament to cricket's enduring and richly logged legend. International footballers and Test rugby union men answer their final whistle each year, remembered often by scarcely a paragraph.

Possibly 1898 has been a less scythingly busy year for the Reeper. The boxer Archie Moore was probably the most luminous light to be extinguished. "Mongoose" Moore, lightning counter-puncher, would have been 85 last Sunday. The genial snooker player Fred Davis, brother of Joe "the Pope of Pot", was also 85. The Welsh rugby legend Ronnie Boon was four years older when he died.

If Fred's finest endeavour was to step (with a skip and his permanent smile) from the awesome shadow of big brother to be world snooker champion eight times in nine years (1949-56), the wing-three-quarter Ronnie's everlasting fame was founded on his try and drop goal which added up to the only points Wales scored in the historic 7-3 defeat of England in 1933.

The first ever Welsh win at Twickenham in all of 10 visits to the stadium which had been opened 23 years before. As well as batsman Boon, three other Glamorgan cricketers (Maurice Turnbull, Wilf Wooller, and Vivian Jenkins) also played for Wales for the first time that famous day.

The Boulevardier-champ Archie Moore once defended his world-lightweight title in London. At Haringey on June 6, 1956, he cut to ribbons the challenger Yolande Pompey in the 10th. Moore was training at a Windsor pub and one day after watching

sparring the Fleet Street eminence Peter Wilson announced he was off to Paris for the tennis. Archie signalled for his trainer to give Wilson a \$50 note. "Buy a bunch of roses for our little gal over there," he said, "and get her another when she comes on over to London." Wilson did so, a gigantic \$25 bouquet - and Althea Gibson became the first black woman to win the French singles title. (At Wimbledon in 1956, Gibson lost in the quarter-finals, but won the following two years at a glorious stroll).

At the Los Angeles Olympic Games 14 years ago, Archie was much in jovial evidence - and hair surely more grey than when he lost to his pupil Muhammad Ali in 1962 when he was 49. Black men, he told me, always made far better boxers "because it's a our birthright".

"Any black man down the generations, no one early how to duck, how to twist his head to stop a whipping. The secret is to ride the blows. I learned defence when my beloved auntie looked to punish me when I was bad. She'd get the switch out and go for me, and I'd pull in close to her so that evil, whistling switch would wrap around me and not hurt."

A different, but just as engaging, student of philosophy mourned by all British sport this year was Denis Howell, the Brumville urchin who learned his basics - "the chivalrous unities of communal sport" - when his beloved Aston Villa football team asked his father how they could help when Howell Sr led out the striking workers of the stove factory next-door to Villa Park in 1925.

THAT was the very year another life-long and passionate administrator, Vera Searle, got married, again with both the AAA's 440 and 220 yards titles, and then began a long labour of devotion to, and care for, women's athletics.

On August 25, Vera blew out the 97 candles on her cake and announced contentedly, "Well, that's it." For performance and life enhancement. Vera, the only Irish stout or Polish vodka. She died on September 12 - eerily, only weeks before "Fio-Jo" Griffith-Joyner, her very under-anthetical, was found dead.

Mind you, if you want sportily to bridge eras and age-gaps, recall the exhortation of the Australian captain Ian Johnson (died in October at 80) at Manchester in 1968 after his side were all out, first innings Lakeland, for 81 in 1966. "If we make 500 we can still win." Looking up from his form-guide in the Old Trafford corner, Keith Miller murmured: "Find me a bookie and I'll lay 6-4 we can't."

United run into Ronaldo trouble

David Lacey

MANCHESTER United's chances of making progress in the Champions League could depend on what side of bed Ronaldo gets out of in March. United have been drawn against Internazionale in the quarter-finals, much will depend on the Brazilian's mood and form.

If Inter are still as inconsistent in three months as they have been for much of the season this will be a winnable tie for United. Sooner or later most teams have to eliminate one of the big Italian sides to win the Champions League.

Usually it is later: in the past 10 years only one final has not featured an Italian club. United will see this quarter-final as an opportunity to

remove important rivals at a relatively early stage.

With Real Madrid, the holders, playing Dynamo Kiev, the two German teams, Bayern Munich and Kaiserslautern, drawn together the way ahead for United could be relatively clear if they can overcome Inter. Juventus, however, will surely remain after meeting Olympiakos.

Old Trafford is under no illusions about the task facing Alex Ferguson's team. "It's a tough draw," said United's chairman Martin Edwards, "but it's also a great draw because of Inter's reputation. They are a really good side who have arguably the world's best player in the shape of Ronaldo." His precise shape has mystified observers ever since he flopped

in the World Cup final in July. Reports of a knee injury have persisted and Ronaldo continues to show his true qualities only in sporadic.

But even if Ronaldo is again off form Inter will be able to call on one or two alternatives to concentrate United's minds at the back. There is, for example, Diego Simeone, whose push in the back sent David Beckham sprawling when England met Argentina in the World Cup. Beckham's dismissal followed his flicking a retaliatory foot at Simeone and so, after a penalty shoot-out, did England's.

Simeone can expect a rough reception at Old Trafford on March 3 when the United crowd will no doubt subject him to the sort of abuse Beckham has been receiving on other English grounds since

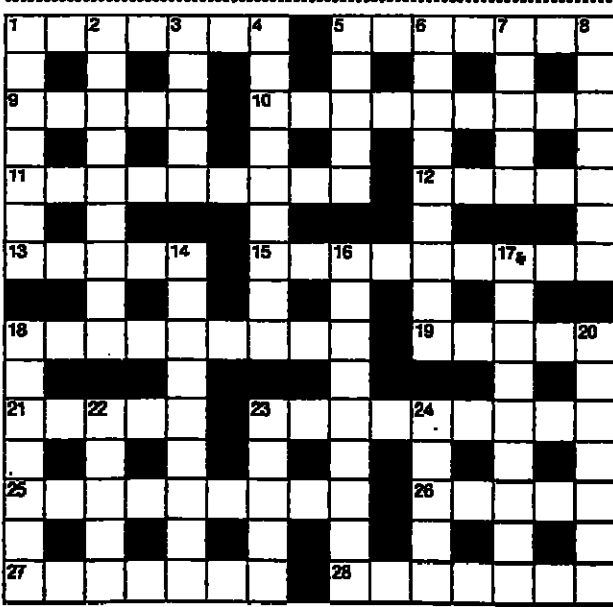
the World Cup. Ferguson will be more concerned about Simeone's skills, along with those of Roberto Baggio and Zinedine Zidane.

Playing their home leg first need not be a disadvantage for United. Monaco knocked United out of last season's quarter-finals when they drew 1-1 at Old Trafford to go through on the away goal, having earlier shared a 0-0 draw. For United it will be almost as important to prevent Inter scoring in the first leg as beating them on the night.

Chelsea's hold on the Cup Winners' Cup is unlikely to be loosened by Valerenga of Norway. With Lazio drawn against Panionios of Athens, an Anglo-Italian final involving Italian-Anglo beckons.

Drawn in results, page 14

Guardian Crossword No 21,460



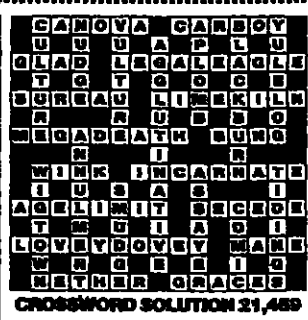
Across

- 1 If not married being in a marquee is hell (7)
- 8 Old Penny is made to go and think differently (7)
- 9 Former Australian territory father said you included (5)
- 10 End erotic dancing, which is incomprehensible... (5)
- 11 ... for continuous dancing it's Cannes you want (9)
- 12 Relaxed when in need but not at first (5)
- 13 Shine after a £1,000 deficit? (5)
- 18 List provided by egghead skilled with numbers (9)
- 19 Number of second flat (5)
- 21 For conspiracy I imprisoned (5)
- 22 Working for oneself in a foreign country, fish (9)
- 28 Public person's added meanings (9)
- 29 Short pole in front of shopping area (5)
- 27 Guaranteed to be ringleader when followed around (7)
- 28 Spring or fall (7)

Down

- 1 Barring going topless, it's splendid (7)

Set by Mercury



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"This is a demoralised little village", added Ronald Reagan's social secretary Muffie Brandon Cabot. "People have come from all over the country to serve a higher calling, and look what happened. They're so disillusioned."
How Washington fell out of love with the Clintons

G2 cover story

150-60-100

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14/ Appointments

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The Guardian Thursday December 17 1998

With SAS behind you,
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SAS

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Client: CIBC • London
Sargent & Lundy is seeking a Head of IT for its new position of Information Technology. The position will be responsible for all IT strategy, development, and operations within the CIBC, but will also have a hands-on role in the day-to-day running of the IT department.

We are seeking to appoint a Head of IT for a new position of Information Technology. The position will be responsible for all IT strategy, development, and operations within the CIBC, but will also have a hands-on role in the day-to-day running of the IT department.

It is a challenging role for an experienced IT professional to lead the development of our rapidly expanding voice network systems and continue to develop our infrastructure for desktop technology and computer networks that will support our administration in the future.

Combining your management experience with a successful record of hands-on problem solving, you will be involved in agreeing and meeting demanding service levels with end-user departments and devising systems to monitor them.

This is a challenging and exciting position that will provide a real opportunity to contribute to the development of a rapidly changing University.

Further details for the above post from the Personnel Department, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield AL10 9AB or tel 01707 284002 (24 hour voicemail), quoting ref 133156G. Closing date: 11th January 1999.

The University is committed to promoting Equal Opportunities.

University of Hertfordshire

Management Services

Communications Manager

Salary £29,801 - £33,816 p.a.

We need an experienced and forward thinking IT/Telecommunications professional to lead the development of our rapidly expanding voice network systems and continue to develop our infrastructure for desktop technology and computer networks that will support our administration in the future.

Focusing on the continuous improvement of these services you will play an important development role and will require the knowledge and experience to become our recognised expert on telecommunications and desktop support.

Combining your management experience with a successful record of hands-on problem solving, you will be involved in agreeing and meeting demanding service levels with end-user departments and devising systems to monitor them.

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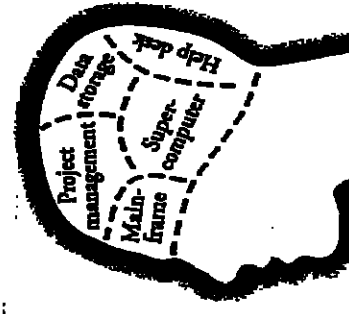
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Central IT Branch consists of three teams, each essential to our operational, commercial and research work. Central IT Facilities supports the central computing services, which include a supercomputer, a mainframe and data storage. The Support & Maintenance team provide a continuously available help desk and manage the single-source hardware maintenance contract, and the IT Operations Centre is an integrated shift-working group which runs IT production systems at Bracknell.

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Reference B4081

Ex-president for hire

Some men who vowed to prepare for a very modern and to its own working life—very richly.

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The Guardian Thursday December 17 1998 • 3

this cosy scene?

Pass notes

No 1319

James Cameron



April 4.

Appearance: The missing Bee Gees — the Gibb brothers they kept locked up in a cupboard.

Poor dear save your pity. Cameron is the man responsible for halting Titanic — and, worst of all — Celine Dion and That Song on humbly.

He's not the guy who roared "I'm the king of the world" at the Ocean's Afridax. "He always was a jerk."

Who said that? His wife, Linda Hamilton, who he met making The Terminator, now wants to turn his relationship. That's divorce number three. But boy, who's counting?

Has he always been this popular? You bet. Actors and crew invariably vote never to work with him again. "Jim has a motto," says Jamie Lee Curtis, "duck or bleed. Never again."

Chief among his crimes is making Kate Winslet cry on Titanic. The brutal!

Surely he must have some friends? Actor Michael Biehn, one of his best pals, puts it like this: "When he's working, Jim does not allow his good-naturedness to get in the way."

But James Wings, budget and intellect — they're on their feet but at day, thinking their intellectual thoughts... If ever made an intellectual movie, I hope someone takes me out and shoots me."

No danger there then? The Cameron oeuvre includes Predator II: The Spawning, The Terminator II: Judgment Day, The Abyss and True Lies.

And what does he do to relax? Film 1-35 jet, scuba dives and rides motorbikes through the desert with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

What do you expect from a guy who grabs the tails of sharks for sport? Says his snappy Weaver.

Interesting little-known facts in 1994 he jacked himself in the bedroom and wrote The Terminator. Rambo: First Blood Part II and Aliens while listening to Holst's Mars: The Bringer Of War.

Another interesting little-known fact: He's Canadian.

So how much is this divorce going to cost him? 250 million if it's lucky. And his likely reaction? Difficult one that. His favourite phrase is "I don't give a rat's ass," and on the rare occasions when that isn't appropriate, "Goddamn it, bullshit, suck!"

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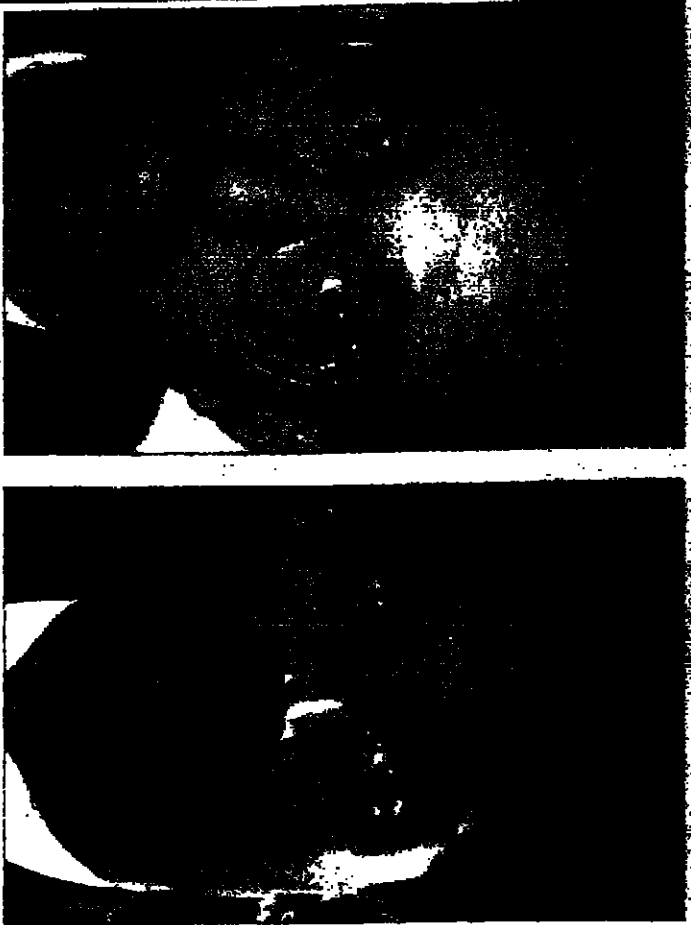
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Ex-president for hire

Some men who vowed to prepare for a very modern and to its own working life—very richly.

It is



Yasmin Alibhai-Brown celebrates
Lives the fiery breed of black and Asian lawyers who have risen from humble origins to change the face of British justice — some enduring death threats along the way

The new avengers

He was the only leftie teacher in my Asian secondary school in Uganda — and Mr BK was dressed with Camille. Sarah, an Indian dentist, Sarah came to Oxford in 1989 to become the first ever woman law student. In this country, in the forties Mr BK came over to follow in the footsteps of his brother, however qualified but his fire burnt on, and for years he lamented me with exhortation to study law and save the world.

And so I replicated these exact arguments to my son as he chose his university subjects. Do law, I begged, think of what you can do for yourself and your community. He ignored me, but one day, I'm sure, he will deliver the same exhortation to one of his own kids, like almost every ambitious Jewish, black and Asian parent. Lawyers have been essential in our battle for equality and justice. If the judges were on the playing fields of Eton, it was mostly lost in or around the Inns of Court. Many of the most effective colonial indigen-

dence fighters were British-educated lawyers. They included Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah. These individuals were sharp practitioners, insiders who could not only be dismissed as madhouse coders. Their searing sense of justice combined with intelligence and creative sophistication made them irresistible (look how Lady Mountbatten succumbed to her scorching desire for Nehru) and in spite of the massive inequality of power often unbecomable. And so it is today. Many of our most hot lawyers are black and Asian. They could not be further from the creatures in this life. Think radical lawyers that means with local uprisings like Mandela, Nelson Mandela, Geoffrey Blundell, Geoffrey Robert, Anthony Lester — not Courtenay Griffiths QC, Rupa Bhalla, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, Peter Herbert, Raj Joshi, Christina Hyde, newly promoted industrial tribunal chair, Iqbal Khan, and Mahmood Javed, the lawyer who recently succeeded in winning a record award of £550,000 for Sam Teboh, a victim of race discrimination by Hackney Council.

At 29, Chris Cleverly is the youngest head of chambers in the country. Danny, a clubber, a male model and a script-writer too, he is now that whereas black clients are nervous of having her represent them for fear of institutional racism, she is always beyond the personal. And that's fine because as an outsider you don't feel the need for the comfort of the inside.

Cleverly — the most of the others in this band of fighters — was not born black, although she cultivated accent and bespoke striped suits (made by his friend, the celebrated tailor Oswald Boadley) could now humiliate the most ambitious snob. His mother was a nurse and his father a systems analyst in Chelmsford, Essex, where young Chris went to school at a largely comprehensive and then to King's College London to study law. Times are changing, he cheerfully says. These days many black police-ment accused of crime ask him to represent them. "I give them, they think, a better, more appealing image," he says. Nicola Williams has also found that race is beginning to matter in unexpected ways. She finds now that whereas black clients are nervous of having her represent them for fear of institutional racism, she is always beyond the personal. And that's fine because as an outsider you don't feel the need for the comfort of the inside.

Williams wrote *Without Prejudice* — a novel which showed how the great and the good in our justice system is betrayed by the great and the good. The story is in there, a successful barrister who was advised by her father to think within her means and to focus on becoming a good local black lawyer.

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Barrister Nicola Williams has found
that race is beginning to matter in unexpected ways — racists and other dregs of society are becoming rather keen on having radical black lawyers

So, if you're very good, you can carry on with good science. If you're not so hot, you'd better get into the fashionable areas of technology. Taylor will be examining ways to start research projects in the new areas; again, he says, harnessing obvious talent is the key.

IF COURSE, he would never try to tell people what to do: the HP way is by invitation.

who actually use the technology. In medical research, for example, most of the big work is not done by those who write the breakthrough papers, and it's certainly not the invention of new machines that determine their success in the marketplace. Without money it would be difficult to implement a lot of technology," he points out. "Part of the job of the science base is education and training, and I hear people talking about serious concerns about skills and skill shortages."

He hasn't looked at the use for nurses or teachers' pay, he says. Those issues may fall outside his remit, but he doesn't back away from the argument. "The point I'm trying to make is that we need to understand the importance of very high grade technicians."

Generally, he prefers not to comment on 'political things'. He

Science for its own sake is a key part of what the science base should be doing, but it had better be done by world class people. Excellence is crucial here

Iron will
 An alliance aims to oust Microsoft from Internet servers, writes Jack Schofield

NO Silicon Valley companies, Oracle and Sun Microsystems, have agreed a technology swap that will enable them to do without Microsoft's Windows NT and other operating systems when building server computers to provide data to Internet users.

The cross-hearing deal announced on Tuesday will let Sun, the market-leading Unix computer supplier, use elements of Oracle's software in Solaris, its version of the Unix operating system, while Oracle, the market-leading database software company, will use core elements of Solaris to create database servers. Larry Ellison, Oracle's chief executive, says Oracle will also use code from other systems, including Linux.

He says the company's latest database will run more efficiently on a bare-bones operating system than on a general purpose system, which the operating system consumes much of the power of the machine. In a keynote speech at the Comdex computer exhibition in Las Vegas in November, Ellison called the idea "Raw Iron", an easy-to-use "database appliance" that runs only Oracle software.

Raw Iron should ship at the end of next March, but it's not clear where the hardware will come from, apart from Sun. At Comdex, Ellison mentioned manufacturers including Dell, Compaq, Hewlett-Packard and Intel. None of these announced their support on Tuesday, but a Dell spokesman said it would support the idea if customers wanted it.

At earlier times by Oracle and Sun for networks without using Windows and other operating systems had had very little appeal. This time, they are in a position of strength. Sun servers running Solaris are the most popular large machines used by Internet service providers, while, says Ellison, nine of the top 10 business-to-business e-commerce sites and 10 of the top 10 consumer e-commerce sites are powered by Oracle's database.

Oracle's main rival here is not Microsoft but IBM, which uses its own powerful database, DB2, to run its own database commerce site, the one Oracle doesn't power. IBM also has its own version of Unix, designs and makes its own chips, builds and sells its own hardware, and — with an annual turnover of \$7.6 billion — is almost 10 times Oracle's size.

Ellison, a multi-billionaire, may feel Microsoft's database software for servers, SQL Server, is a long-term threat, or he may just enjoy beating Microsoft. When Microsoft announced a new version, SQL 7, he challenged "If you can make SQL 7 run no less than 100 times slower than Oracle's, we'll give you a million dollars."

“Most of us have bought the myth. We believe that there is a right way to celebrate Christmas. We believe the only people capable of organizing this property are women. But it's not true. Men can do Christmas, too. At least I think they can. OK, maybe they might need a few pointers. Or perhaps a list. Perhaps we should do this cards. And the tree. And the presents. But they can do the washing up. Can't they?”

